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LEAGUE OF NATIONS

ADVISORY COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION IN 1935

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Report on the Work of the Eleventh Session of the Child Welfare Committee, held at Geneva, April 25th to May 3rd, 1935 3

Report on the Work of the Thirteenth Session of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee, held at Geneva, May 2nd to 9th, 1935 36

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CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION

(Geneva, April 25th to May 3rd, 1935.)

The eleventh session of the Child Welfare Committee opened at Geneva on April 25th, 1935, under the Chairmanship of M. Enrique GAJARDO, delegate of Chile, and the Vice-Chairmanship of Dr. HEIN, delegate of Denmark.

I. Composition of the Committee.

Government Delegates:

M. E. GAJARDO *(Chairman)*	*Chile.*
Dr. Estrid HEIN *(Vice-Chairman)*	*Denmark.*
His Excellency Count CARTON DE WIART M. I. MAUS, technical expert	*Belgium.*
Mr. S. W. HARRIS Miss J. I. WALL, substitute delegate	*United Kingdom.*
M. MARTINEZ-AMADOR Doña Matilde HUICI	*Spain.*
Dr. Martha ELIOT	*United States of America.*
His Excellency M. REGNAULT M. BOURGOIS, substitute delegate Mlle. CHAPTAL, technical adviser	*France.*
The Begam SHAH NAWAZ	*India.*
Count Ugo CONTI-SINIBALDI Princess GIUSTINIANI-BANDINI, deputy delegate	*Italy.*
His Excellency M. CHODZKO Mme. WOYTOWICZ-GRABINSKA, substitute delegate	*Poland.*
Princess CANTACUZÈNE, His Excellency M. PELLA	*Roumania.*
M. Celâl HAZIM	*Turkey.*
His Excellency M. BENAVIDES	*Uruguay.*

Assessors:

Mlle. BURNIAUX	International Federation of Trade Unions, Amsterdam.
Judge CALOYANNI	International Association for Child Welfare.
Mlle. DALMAZZO	International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues.
M. TELLO	Pan-American Child Welfare Institute.
Mme. J. E. VAJKAI	International " Save the Children " Union.

Liaison Officer:

Mr. G. A. JOHNSTON	International Labour Office.

Secretariat:

M. E. E. EKSTRAND	Director of the Opium Traffic and Social Questions Sections.

Mlle. Gourd, Assessor, representing the International Women's Organisations, Miss Charlotte Whitton, delegate of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare and of the Social Service Council of Canada, and Dame Rachel Crowdy were unable to be present at the session.

Dr. René Sand, Assessor, representing the League of Red Cross Societies, who acts as liaison agent with the Health Organisation, was replaced in that last-named capacity by His Excellency Dr. Chodzko.

* * *

The Chairman expressed his regret that the withdrawal of Japan from the League of Nations had deprived the Committee of the valuable collaboration which its Japanese members had brought from the very beginning of its work. On the motion of the representative of Denmark, supported by the representatives of Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Poland, the Committee expressed its unanimous wish that the Council of the League should be requested to invite the Japanese Government to continue its collaboration with the work of this Committee in the future.

In pursuance of a request from the Canadian Government, submitted by the Canadian Advisory Officer accredited to the League of Nations, the question of that Government's representation on the Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People was examined.

The Commission unanimously expressed the desire that Canada's collaboration, which had hitherto been afforded to the Child Welfare Committee simply by an assessor representing the Canadian Council on Child Welfare and the Social Service Council of Canada, should henceforward become official — *i.e.*, that the Canadian Government should be invited to send a delegate to serve as a member of the Child Welfare Committee and the Traffic in Women and Children Committee.

At the opening of the session, the substitute delegate of Poland paid a tribute to the memory of M. Henri Rollet, former judge of the Children's Court of the Seine, who for several years had represented the International Association for Child Welfare on the Committee. The delegates of Belgium, France and Italy paid a tribute to the memory of M. Rollet, with which all the members of the Committee associated themselves. The Assessor representing the International Association for Child Welfare thanked the members of the Committee for their appreciative reference to his predecessor, and the Committee unanimously decided to request the Secretariat to convey its sincere sympathy to Mme. Rollet.

II. Adoption of the Agenda.

The Committee adopted the draft agenda submitted to it by the Sub-Committee.

III. Report by the Secretary.

The report submitted by the Secretary on the progress of the work of the Secretariat since the last session was adopted.

IV. Institutions for Neglected and Delinquent Minors.

Study of Neglected and Delinquent Minors and the Documentation thereon.

It is advisable to recall here the order in which the Child Welfare Committee has dealt with the problem of the treatment of neglected and delinquent minors — viz., (1) The information furnished by Governments on " Auxiliary Services of Juvenile Courts " (document C.P.E.238(1)) and the report by Mme. Grabinska and M. Rollet on the subject (document C.P.E.293.1931) were published in 1931 and discussed at the April session of the Child Welfare Committee in that year; (2) official information from Governments on the " Organisation of Juvenile Courts and the Results attained hitherto " (document C.975.M.540 1931.IV.[C.P.E.315]) was published in 1932 and discussed at the Committee's April session in that year; (3) Government replies to a questionnaire on " Institutions for Erring and Delinquent Minors " (document C.1.M.1.1934.IV.[C.P.E.430]) were published in 1934 for discussion at the session of the Committee in that year and were supplemented by comparative summaries compiled by M. Maus (document C.P.E.456), Miss Wall (document C.P.E.468) and Mme. Woytowicz-Grabinska (document C.P.E.450).

In 1934 also, a fourth additional questionnaire was sent to all Governments on the boardingout of children in families, as applied to all children over 3 years of age, the replies of which are to be submitted and discussed in 1936.

Conclusions so far adopted.

It should be observed with reference to the questions under (1) and (2) that the Committee did not draw any final conclusions, but expressed the opinion that final conclusions would have to be drawn after a thorough study of the whole problem of the treatment of neglected and delinquent minors, the various aspects of which form one study.

As regards point (3), the Committee has thought it possible at the present time to offer suggestions.

On the basis of the contents of the relevant documents (C.P.E.430, 456, 468 and 450) and of the discussions on the subject held by the Child Welfare Committee elucidating the problem in both its theoretical and its practical aspects, it is possible to draw conclusions as

follows on institutions for neglected and delinquent minors, taking the problems in the following order :

1. Definition of minors.
2. Prisons.
3. Institutions :

   (A) (*i*) General observations,
   (*ii*) Specific observations ;

   (B) Internal organisation of institutions ;

   (C) Release.

1. Definition of Minors.

From the information furnished by Governments, it appears that the maximum age at which minors can be admitted to institutions for re-education and training varies within somewhat wide limits. In general, this maximum age is the same as that fixed as the limit for the jurisdiction of a juvenile court, though in some countries there is power for the ordinary courts to commit young people over the prescribed age to institutions of a correctional type, instead of sentencing them to prison. Bound up with these questions in varying degrees of practical importance are the different legal interpretations of the age of criminal responsibility.

The Committee considers that it would be useful for a study to be prepared on the age of criminal responsibility, with special reference to the effect of the different systems of law on the measures applicable to the care and training of neglected or delinquent minors. The Committee therefore requests the Social Section, in collaboration with the Legal Section, to prepare this study for its next session, and asks Miss Wall to be Rapporteur on the question.

2. Prisons.

It may be advisable at the outset to recall that the question of sending children and young persons to prison was discussed by the Child Welfare Committee at previous sessions — viz., in 1931 — in connection with the discussion on the question of penal administration (*cf.* Report of the Seventh Session, document C.249.M.113.1931.IV), and at its 1932 session in connection with the question of juvenile courts (*cf.* Report on the Work of the Eighth Session of the Child Welfare Committee, document C.395.M.221.1932.IV). As a result, a resolution was adopted to the effect " that at once all confinement in prisons should be absolutely excluded in the case of children, and that in cases of delinquency the treatment applied to them should be prompted by a desire for their education and training and not for their punishment ".

On the question of keeping young persons in prison, the Committee did not at the time express a final opinion on the subject, but left the matter to be settled in future in connection with the proposal to collect the relevant documentation.

Even at that date, however, some members of the Committee emphasised that it was essential for the Child Welfare Committee to express an opinion on the objections that might be urged against the system of keeping, not only children, but also young persons in prisons.

In the light of the above facts and considering that the Child Welfare Committee is now in possession of certain information on prisons for minors and also on institutions such as those of the Borstal type, the Committee, after a thorough discussion, considers that it can now appropriately make reference also to the question of the detention of young persons in prisons, as follows :

" The Child Welfare Committee,

" Having found, on the basis of the information collected,

" That most countries still allow children in certain cases to be sentenced to imprisonment or to be kept in prison pending trial ;

" That, according to an opinion already twice expressed by the Committee, confinement in prisons should be absolutely excluded in the case of children, and that, in cases of delinquency, the treatment applied to them should be prompted by a desire for their education and training and not for their punishment ;

" That even the best organised prison is not, in view of its character, a suitable place for applying educative methods to children who are in process of mental and physical development :

" Expresses the wish that all countries that have hitherto tolerated the imprisonment of children in any form whatsoever should aim at abolishing this system, replacing it in the case of delinquent minors by suitable measures of a purely educative character.

" Furthermore,

" Inasmuch as the maximum age at which minors are regarded as criminally responsible does not in several legal systems always correspond to the age at which a boy or girl is mentally altogether mature, and in many cases is several years below the age at which a child attains its civil majority ;

" And inasmuch as in the majority of cases the serving of a sentence of imprisonment by delinquent minors offers certain dangers to their immature mentality :

" Steps should be taken to see that young persons are only sent to prison in exceptional cases, and that the competent authorities have the power to apply to young persons who have committed an offence, instead of sentences of imprisonment, other measures — *e.g.*, confinement in appropriate institutions such as those of the Borstal type."

3. Institutions.

A. (i) *General Observations.*

In the course of the enquiries which the Committee has been conducting on institutions for neglected and delinquent children, much information has been furnished as to various measures which are applied either by Juvenile Courts or by their auxiliary services, or by any other competent authority. Among these are the service of the psychological or child guidance clinic, the use of probation and of hostels, and the system of boarding-out with foster-parents, the latter forming the subject of a special enquiry by the Committee at the present time. These matters are being reserved for consideration when the whole survey is completed ; but in its present study of institutions, by which is meant the establishments which take neglected and delinquent minors, the Committee recognises that institutional training is only one of the methods available for the assistance of these young people.

Although the Committee's deliberations have been centred on institutions for young people in special types of difficulty, it is worth recognising that the conclusions reached in regard to them may have an application to many other kinds of institution, whether under voluntary or under official management and whether they exist for other classes of children such as orphans or destitute or neglected children, it being impossible to draw hard-and-fast lines between the requirements of one set of children and another.

Institutions are to-day a very usual as they are a readily available method of providing shelter, care and supervision for children who are in moral danger. The Committee recognises the good work which these establishments have done, and appreciates that they were generally first in the field in the development of child welfare schemes in various countries, and there is no doubt, from the information received, that many institutions have developed high standards in training and in re-education, and that those who direct them are inspired by high ideals and by a spirit of social service.

In expressing an opinion on the various forms of grouping children within an institution, it would seem advisable to direct attention specially to the so-called cottage system, which, from the standpoint of organisation, most closely resembles an ordinary home. It should be observed that, in practice, this system effectively minimises the disadvantages of institutionalism and of artificial community life, and creates better educational conditions for developing the social sense of the inmates.

Before considering certain definite aspects of the organisation of institutions, attention should be drawn to the fact that many countries are to-day reconsidering the rôle of the institution in their schemes of child care and protection. Recognising the limitations of institutional training, they are attempting alternative methods of treatment or are resorting to the institution only if a child or young person fails to respond to a trial in ordinary family life, under supervision.

A good deal can, however, be done to lessen the disadvantages of life in an institution, and attention is drawn in this report to steps which may be taken to this end. In general, the solution appears to lie in an appreciation of the directions in which such a life is artificial and divorced from realities as compared with family life, in taking appropriate measures to overcome deficiencies and in constantly keeping in view that the object of the institution is to prepare the child or young person for independent and unsheltered life outside the institution.

In organising an institution, it is often overlooked that the inmates, particularly the older ones and those about to be placed out, have had no opportunity of shouldering responsibilities, showing initiative or exercising forethought, and that many have had no private life of their own.

Beneficial as good premises and sound organisation undoubtedly are to the well-being of the inmates, the spirit of the establishment is the factor which requires most careful cultivation, so that the personality of the inmates may develop in an atmosphere of affection, trust and happiness, which resembles, so far as possible, the atmosphere in the best home life of the day.

By constantly comparing the standards and mode of life outside with the practice in the institution, by adjusting, so far as possible, institutional habits, whether in matters of importance or in detail, to outside standards, and by free contact with normal life, those in charge will not only gain interest and breadth of view themselves, but will better understand the conditions which await the young people under their care.

Institutions can serve the community well, provided they have firmly in mind that they are not an end in themselves and that the value of their work will be judged, not on the basis of whether the establishment runs smoothly, but on the far harder test of the behaviour and social adjustment of the young people after leaving the shelter of the institution.

(ii) *Specific Observations.*

As regards the kind of institutions in which neglected or delinquent minors are placed by virtue of the decisions of juvenile courts or of other competent authorities, it is desirable to direct special attention to the following questions :

(a) *Observation Centres.*

Considering that among neglected and delinquent minors there is a very high percentage of children who are retarded in development, nervous, mentally backward, psychopaths, etc., and that an accurate diagnosis of their characteristics, which is necessary for the application of the appropriate educative or curative measures, is very difficult if not preceded by a period of observation under suitable conditions, steps should be taken to see that juvenile courts, and the other authorities authorised to take decisions in regard to such children, should have at their disposal institutions designed for the observation of neglected and delinquent minors, on the lines of the Belgian observation centre at Moll.

It should, accordingly, be recommended that the widest possible publicity be given to the organisation of such institutions, and that they should be established as far as possible in all countries.

(b) *Special Institutions.*

Since the logical sequence of a medico-psychological diagnosis of neglected or delinquent minors is to put them under the form of supervision appropriate to their mental and physical condition, it would seem extremely desirable to organise among the institutions designed for such children a sufficient number of establishments of a special character.

(c) *Educational Institutions.*

Among the numerous and different kinds of educational institutions, special attention should be directed to the " hostel " type of establishment organised in some countries, in which children live under a system of semi-liberty, enabling them to have independent work or training outside the hostel. By affording the inmates regular contact with normal everyday life under the supervision of the teachers, these hostels make a very special contribution to the formation of the characters of neglected and delinquent minors and to their social re-adaptation.

(d) *Reformative Institutions.*

As an alternative to prison, it would seem necessary to stress the extreme importance of having among the reformative type of institution some establishments of a Borstal character, which provide at a later age the sort of training and education given to younger boys and girls at residential schools of the educational type. Such institutions, as organised in some countries following the example of the United Kingdom, form a favourable field for the training of young offenders, as they combine the necessary discipline with the system of the more educational establishment.

(e) *The Title of the Institutions.*

Since delinquent minors are only one subdivision of a more general group of children who are in moral or social danger, and as it is advisable to avoid features which separate such minors into a class by themselves, the aim should be to give up the practice of calling institutions for such children by names which expressly imply that they are places for training delinquent minors.

For the same reason also, the inclusion, as is the practice in some countries, of all institutions for delinquent minors under a common heading of " educational institutions " would seem to merit special emphasis.

As regards the administration and supervision of public and the supervision of private institutions for delinquent minors, it is desirable that these services should be entrusted to a special section of general administration other than the section responsible for prisons.

B. *Internal Organisation of Institutions.*

On the internal organisation of institutions, both educational and correctional, for neglected and delinquent minors, it would seem possible to draw the following conclusions :

(f) *Examination of the Child's Personality.*

(*i*) The essential condition, if training is to produce a result, is an exact knowledge of the individuality of the child entering the institution. The task of the directors of the institution

should be facilitated in this respect by the competent authorities who have placed the child in the institution. The institution should be supplied with a number of particulars regarding the inmate — namely, the history of his life, the features of his previous environment and the results of the psychological, psychiatric and physical examination which he has undergone.

(*ii*) It would also seem advisable for every institution not to be content with these particulars, but to carry out on admission a supplementary observation test of the children in sections specially organised for the purpose and on the methods established for psychological and medical examination.

The authorities of the institution must then act on the results of this observation and allocate the child to the appropriate classification for work and study and allot it to a suitable group of inmates, so as to enable the teachers to adapt their pedagogical methods to each individual pupil.

In addition to the initial observation test, further similar examinations should be carried out at intervals during the child's stay in the institution.

(g) *Staff.*

(*i*) The practical application of rational methods of training is possible only in institutions with an adequate and qualified staff. It is desirable for this staff to be recruited from persons of high principles, possessing special pedagogical training and with a sense of vocation. Training for their profession must also be based on a certain amount of practical experience.

(*ii*) As it is essential for the educational spirit to pervade the whole life of the pupil, and as work plays the leading part in life, it would seem to be very necessary for the staff responsible for the practical vocational education of the inmates to have, in addition, certain pedagogical training.

(*iii*) It is desirable that the staff should include doctors who are specialists in the psychopathology of children, and also psychologists.

(*iv*) As the co-operation of women in forming the character of children imparts to that training special elements, it would seem advisable not to deprive neglected and delinquent boys of this valuable influence, and to arrange, according to the special circumstances of the case, for women to take part also in teaching in the institutions for boys.

Moreover, there is no general objection to the employment of men qualified for certain branches of instruction at institutions for girls.

(h) *Physical Education.*

As regards physical education and games in institutions for children, it must be pointed out that the rational utilisation of these factors not only serves to strengthen the physical health of the inmates, but is also one of the factors in forming their characters.

In this connection, a matter of special interest is the establishment in the institutions of such autonomous organisations as scout troops, sports clubs, etc., which can be linked up with similar national associations, while at the same time giving the children opportunities to engage in competitions with other teams outside the institution.

(i) *Disciplinary Punishment.*

Disciplinary punishments applied to children should not be prejudicial to their physical health or moral well-being, and should, in particular, not be of such a kind as to weaken the child's sense of personal dignity.

(j) *Rewards.*

It would seem undeniable that the moral and social progress of the inmates of an institution can be freely developed only in an atmosphere of trust, understanding, affection and happiness. It is therefore satisfactory to note that in many countries great weight is attached both to the recreational side of the inmates' lives and to the system of educative rewards.

Among the latter — apart from the granting of certain material privileges — are certain rewards that merit special mention owing to their humanising character and to the personal responsibility that they develop, such as singling out an inmate by entrusting to him certain supervisory functions in the institution, the right to leave the institution premises without permission, participation in entertainments outside the establishment, etc.

(k) *Religious, Scholastic and Vocational Training.*

The Committee feels that :

(*i*) Every child ought to be given in the institution an opportunity of religious training and education in the faith to which he belongs ;

(*ii*) Every child ought to receive in the institution the mental training adapted to his age and degree of intellectual development.

On the basis of the information collected, it may be asserted that, in most countries, the teaching is equivalent to that given at elementary schools. In this connection, it is

particularly noteworthy that some institutions give their abler inmates opportunities of secondary and even university education and also afford inmates who are specially gifted the chance of developing their talents (art, music, languages, etc.).

Very valuable also is the system of scholastic education under which provision is made for some of those under training who are mentally subnormal or educationally backward to receive instruction in special classes or schools.

As regards older inmates who are nearing the end of their period in the institution, a method which is extremely interesting and useful, as applied in some institutions, is to give such inmates special extra lessons on current events and information regarding social requirements (civil rights and responsibilities, social insurance, savings banks, labour exchanges, etc.). This extra training may be given either in the form of appropriate courses or of special talks, wireless lectures, reading of daily newspapers, etc. The co-operation in this work of outside child welfare associations may be useful.

(*iii*) Every child should be given practical vocational training in the institution.

It should be emphasised that, in the training of neglected children and of those in moral danger, the work factor, so prominent in all training institutions, acts as the main source of social regeneration, and at the same time constitutes a practical basis for independent life in the future.

The question of a suitable choice of vocation is therefore fundamental, and it is essential that this choice should take account, not only of the child's bent, but also of his capacities. The system has been adopted with advantage in some countries of ascertaining vocational aptitude by psychological tests.

Among the various systems of vocational training, a particularly interesting one is that of apprenticing (often for wages) the older inmates outside the institution, this system being at the same time one of the ways of gradually adapting the pupils to normal life in society.

It should be observed that, in many countries, the question of the relation between the wages paid and the work done by inmates in the institution in the field of vocational training takes the form of granting them either a regular remuneration or periodical bonuses ; in both these systems, some of the money is deposited in the minor's savings bank account, thus forming a nest-egg which will be returned to him on leaving, while the remainder is given to him as pocket-money to use as he likes.

It should be emphasised that this form of procedure, which, within the limits of a modest budget, permits the inmate to become accustomed both to saving money and to spending it wisely, is of special interest from the standpoint of practical preparation for a future life of independence.

(l) *Relations with the Outside World.*

(*i*) Here it would seem necessary to emphasise first that, with a view to the inmate's return to normal social life, it is essential that his ties with his family should not be broken, as the breaking or excessive weakening of those ties might be followed by an unfortunate loss of family instinct and the creation of an atmosphere of mutual indifference between the child and his family circle. For these reasons, it would seem indispensable that, while in the institution, inmates should, as far as possible, keep in touch with their families to the extent determined by the Board of the institution in each particular case, according to the special character of the child and the nature of the family circle, and not according to predetermined rules.

(*ii*) Further, rational resort by the authorities of the institution to various ways of keeping inmates in touch with the outside world (correspondence, visits of relatives, visits to relatives, leave, work outside the institution, excursions, summer camps, sports, competitions, etc.) makes an agreeable break in the monotony of the everyday routine of the institution, and is very effective in re-adapting neglected children to society.

(m) *Length of Stay.*

The purpose of training neglected or delinquent minors in the relevant institutions is to restore to individuals who have been morally handicapped in early life their mental and physical health and, by stimulating definite social interests and giving them a practical preparation for life, to make them useful members of society.

It is therefore understandable that the period of stay necessary for achieving this purpose cannot be laid down in advance, but must depend on the results of the training given in each particular case.

From this standpoint it would seem possible to state that the system, applied in very many countries, of sending neglected or delinquent minors to institutions, not for fixed periods, but for periods varying between a fixed minimum and a fixed maximum term, is the most suitable method in practice.

On the other hand, it should be strongly emphasised that lengthy confinement in institutions of persons under training who are already fit for independent life must be avoided as prejudicial to the persons themselves.

C. *Release.*

(n) *Provisional Conditional and Final Release. Conduct after Release.*

(*i*) As regards the final release of an inmate from an institution, it is to be observed that, in a great many countries, such final release is always preceded by a period of provisional release, during which the minor is liberated subject to a general proviso that he will conduct himself properly, supervision of such conduct being entrusted to social or official agencies.

The application on the widest scale of this period for testing the inmate's moral calibre as well as his practical capacity for life, carried out under the observation of competent organisations, would seem to be one of the best ways of protecting him from the dangers resulting from his inexperience of life.

(*ii*) Since the neglected and delinquent minors trained in institutions are mainly drawn from socially depressed *milieux*, or are either completely orphaned or without father or mother, or are abandoned children, their return to normal life in society is often associated with the danger of moral isolation or of contact with harmful influences in their old environment. It is therefore indispensable to give in such cases, either through official or social organisations, some special help and supervision (homes for young people, help in finding employment, moral welfare, etc.), which should be continued until they are completely settled in life.

(o) *Recording of Results of Training.*

In view of the necessity of having as accurate data as possible, with a view to drawing the necessary conclusions regarding neglected and delinquent minors, these conclusions being indispensable for judging the effectiveness of the various methods of treatment applied to such children, it is extremely desirable that all welfare institutions for neglected and delinquent minors should keep individual case-cards for their inmates which would contain the fullest possible information regarding the results of the examination of the child's individuality and the course of his development during training at the institution.

In using this information later, however, it is important to proceed with the greatest discretion in order not to interfere in lives which may for some years past have been reformed, by reviving the memory of acts which, through the irreproachable conduct of the authors, have become completely forgotten.

(p) *Continuation of the General Study of the Problem of Neglected and Delinquent Children.*

The Committee decided, with reference to the arrangements previously made to carry out a general study of the problem of neglected and delinquent children, to place the question on the agenda of the 1937 session. A sub-committee of the Committee will be set up during the 1936 session to prepare, in collaboration with the Secretariat, the Committee's programme of work for 1937.

V. The Recreational Aspect of the Cinematograph for Young People.

Last year the Child Welfare Committee decided to take as one of its principal subjects in 1935 the question of the recreational aspect of the cinematograph for young people, and as a preliminary step towards the consideration of this subject the members of the Committee were invited to furnish information from the countries they represent. The assessors also were asked to collect material. The United Kingdom delegate was appointed Rapporteur, and on his suggestion a memorandum was circulated to the members and assessors indicating a number of points on which information would be valuable.[1]

In reply to the questions suggested in this memorandum, a good deal of interesting information was collected from most of the countries represented on the Committee, though it was much fuller for some countries than for others. The general effect of the replies, a summary of which is contained in an annex,[2] is as follows :

(a) *Age of Admission.*

In some countries there is no restriction of any kind, children being freely admitted to cinemas. In others the exactly opposite policy is adopted, and under a certain age there is complete prohibition. Between these two extremes lies the practice, adopted in some countries, of distinguishing films which are not considered suitable for children and leaving the responsibility with the parents. In no case do the arrangements seem to be very satisfactory.

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[1] See Appendix I.
[2] See Appendix II.

Either the child is robbed of a good deal of legitimate enjoyment or he is bound to see much that he would be better not to see. Where the decision is left to the parent, the parent has not usually enough information to enable him to decide in advance, and he may be influenced by a desire to keep the children out of mischief by taking them with him.

(b) *Frequency of Attendance.*

In some countries the attendance of children at the cinema is very small. In striking contrast is the experience of others, where a large percentage go at least once a week. An enquiry made respecting 120 elementary schools in Japan showed that 3.9% of the boys and 1.1% of the girls attended the cinema. A similar enquiry covering 21,000 children in elementary schools in London showed that 77% attended the cinema and 30% of these once a week. The experience of the United States is similar to that of the United Kingdom, and it is estimated that in the United States about eleven million children under 14 are weekly attendants.

(c) *Effect on Mentality.*

The replies give little information of value on this point. It is interesting, however, to quote the conclusions arrived at from a careful enquiry made two or three years ago among London schoolchildren :

(*i*) The morally questionable element in films is ignored by children of school age, and, in fact, bores them. It may do harm in particular cases, but there appears to be no widespread mischief. Other enquirers agree as to this.

(*ii*) The younger children for a time imitate in their play what they have seen on the films, but these external evidences of film influence are usually fugitive and confined to play.

(*iii*) Some children absorb film knowledge which seems to be kept in a mental compartment used in school only when an appropriate stimulus is applied.

(*iv*) The one distinct evil that is mentioned with such frequency by inspectors and teachers, and with such specific examples as to leave little doubt of its existence, is that children are often frightened at the films, and that the fear remains with them and causes dreams. The enquiry indeed brought out no other point on which there was definite evidence of harm.

(*v*) As a means of enlarging the children's experience (not by any means always in an undesirable way) and of giving clear-cut knowledge of certain kinds, the cinema is an effective instrument.

It is only right to add that these conclusions were not fully discussed by the Committee, and the delegates of Belgium, Italy and Roumania dissociated themselves from the first and second conclusions. The Belgian delegate stated that observation made in the institutions at Moll and at Saint-Gervais of children brought before courts shows a very high percentage of cases in which the cinema has been the direct cause of offences committed by these children.

(d) *Special Performances.*

In several of the countries for which information is given, attempts have been made from time to time to provide special performances for children ; but comparatively little appears to have been done systematically. Financial difficulty is stated to be one of the obstacles. The practice of holding special matinées for children on Saturday afternoons is not uncommon in some of the largest cities ; but, in the absence of suitable films, the programmes leave much to be desired.

(e) *Types of Films which appeal to Children.*

The replies on this point are not very illuminating, and merely show that children like what they might be expected to like. Boys like films of adventure and girls prefer romances. In this respect, children are much the same in all parts of the world.

(f) *Provision of Special Films.*

No serious attempt appears yet to have been made to furnish films specially suitable for children, and sometimes when scenarios have been chosen from fairy stories or other children's classics, the treatment has been so sophisticated as to appeal not to children so much as to their parents.

The examination of this material led to a useful exchange of views by members of the Committee, and there was general agreement as to some of the conclusions which could properly be drawn from this preliminary study :

1. There is an increasing tendency for the cinema to cater for the adult rather than the juvenile, which has to some extent led to the exclusion of young people from the cinema. This has not happened to the same degree where the cinema has retained the characteristics of a family entertainment. If, as seems desirable, the cinema is to remain for the most part a family entertainment, the provision of a good supply of suitable family films is an important consideration.

2. Though progress has been made in developing the educational side of the cinema for young people, the recreational aspect has been largely neglected. There is a notable lack of entertainment films which are specially intended to appeal to youthful tastes. This situation is mainly due to financial reasons. The cost of the modern film is very high, and this can be recouped only by substantial charges for admission beyond the small sums the children can afford to pay. The solution would appear to lie in the direction of the production of special films for young people at a much lower cost. There is good ground for the belief that a simple story simply told would appeal to the young more than the sophisticated version.

3. There is great need for the organisation of special performances for children, which in turn would help to stimulate the demand for programmes composed of special films. Such special performances cannot readily be made commercially attractive, owing to the necessarily low prices of admission, but in some countries successful experiments have been made by local authorities or voluntary societies with the co-operation of the commercial exhibitors. Co-operation of this kind would appear to afford the most hopeful method of overcoming the difficulties which are presented in the organisation of special performances for young people.

In the course of the discussion, a number of other points were referred to. Some delegates thought that news reels, which are most valuable in giving young people a picture of contemporary life, were apt to deal too exclusively with certain aspects, especially military and sporting events. Other delegates drew attention to the harm done to young people by the vulgarity, and even indecency, of some of the posters used to advertise films. It was also pointed out that the cinema habit among young people is growing in Eastern countries, and that some of the films produced in Western countries give the young people of Eastern countries a perverted view of the habits and customs of Europe and America. The unfortunate impression created by films of this kind was emphasised by representatives of Eastern countries on the Committee. Reference was made to the value of travelling cinemas in providing young people in rural districts with opportunities for entertainment.

Some members thought that parents were not always the best judges of films suitable for their children ; others commented on the importance of securing the co-operation of teachers in the elementary schools. It was suggested that much valuable help might be given in the schools if the teachers were to discuss the matter with their pupils and encourage them to go to the right type of films. It was also pointed out that a good deal of information is being gained in different countries, not only as to films which are specially suitable for children, but also as to those which are undesirable, and the suggestion was made that the possibility of instituting some central exchange of this information might well be worth consideration.

The Child Welfare Committee came to the conclusion that, as the information before it was partial and incomplete, its consideration of this question at the present session must of necessity be provisional, and that it would not be justified in forming any definite opinions or making any specific recommendations. It is satisfied, however, that the recreational aspect of the cinema is one of international importance from the point of view of the welfare of young people, and that it deserves closer examination. The Committee thinks that the best way of pursuing the task to which it has set itself is to obtain fuller information, and for this purpose it recommends that a questionnaire similar to that already referred to should be sent to the States Members of the League, and that the Secretariat should collate and analyse the information so obtained, with a view to further consideration of the question at the next session. The Committee also decided to invite the Council to send the material so far collected, together with the Committee's preliminary comments, to the International Educational Cinematographic Institute at Rome for any observations which that Institute may be able to offer.

VI. Report by the Liaison Agent with the International Educational Cinematographic Institute.

The Liaison Agent with the International Educational Cinematographic Institute has submitted his annual report on those aspects of the Institute's activities which are of particular interest to the Committee. He recommends members of the Committee to urge their respective Governments to ratify the international Convention on the abolition of Customs barriers in respect of films having an educational character.

He also proposes that, at its next session, the Committee should endeavour to enumerate the features which a film must possess in order to be regarded as a suitable film for young people. He requests the members of the Committee to study the question and to send their suggestions to the Secretariat in due course.

The Liaison Agent also describes the proceedings of the International Cinematographic Congress held at Rome in 1934.

VII. Ascertainment of Blind Children.[1]

In considering the question of the means by which the existence of blind children can be ascertained, the Child Welfare Committee had the advantage of a valuable report prepared by Dr. Estrid Hein, the delegate of Denmark, Dr. René Sand, a member of the Health Committee of the League of Nations, and Mr. Lovett, an official of the Ministry of Health, London, who has had special experience of work on blindness.

In these days many countries try to secure information — through the census — as to the number of blind persons living in the country. The object of this procedure is partly to ascertain the extent of the damage with the object of remedying it and partly to take such humane measures as may create the best possible conditions for the blind.

The most generally accepted definition of blindness in children is that " they are too blind to be able to read ordinary school-books ". Such a definition does not apply to the eyesight of babies or pre-school children. No exact definition of blindness in children from birth to 7 years can be given, and the degree of defectiveness will, in a great many cases, be a matter of subjective judgment even for the specialist, as it cannot be ascertained by any objective test. A thorough investigation will be necessary in each separate case.

Those countries which have compulsory school education will, as a rule, detect blind children at school age (though a few children may escape detection). Whether the country has compulsory school education or not, valuable years of the blind child's life may be lost without any adequate specialised education. Nowadays, there is a general consensus of opinion that the first years of a normal child's life are of the most fundamental significance to its later development. This applies with even greater force to the blind child. If it is not wisely brought up, it will, by the time it reaches school age, have acquired bad habits which may take years to correct. It is bad for the child to have neglectful or indifferent parents, but it is nearly as bad to have over-solicitous parents, who spoil it and at every turn prevent it from doing things for itself. Often the parents are neither neglectful nor over-solicitous, but are ignorant of the special needs of blind children, and the early discovery of blindness makes it possible to give such parents the necessary information and encouragement.

This detection of blindness in young children, however, is an exceedingly difficult matter. Different methods are followed in different countries.

(a) *Discovery through the Census.*

The census is not a very reliable method of obtaining this information, for several reasons :

(*i*) It is difficult to give any definition of what constitutes blindness when a child is very young.

(*ii*) In most cases it is practically impossible for the collector of census papers to decide whether a child — especially a very young child — should be entered as blind.

(*iii*) Parents are often reluctant to admit the fact of blindness or to enter it on the census paper.

(*iv*) Owing to the lapse of time before the result of the census can be published, it may be too late for any useful action to be taken.

(b) *Notification.*

Notification might be made compulsory upon parents or guardians, or only upon such officials as come into contact with the child between birth and school age : (1) midwives and doctors (at birth) ; (2) ministers of religion (at baptism) ; (3) doctors (in consultation hours or at the time of vaccination) ; (4) infant welfare centres and health visitors ; (5) school census collectors (where such census is taken by school nurses, health visitors or other competent individuals and where the questionnaire covers items in regard to physically handicapped children of pre-school age — 1 to 6 years — as well as children who are about to enter school).

Notification by parents will meet with strong opposition on the part of some parents if they believe that the object of discovering the young child's blindness is to take the child away from home and place it in an institution ; and there may be a strong tendency in all but the most enlightened parents to conceal their child's blindness.

Notification in itself will be useless if it is not supplemented by several provisions which aim at assisting the parents in the education of the blind child and are in themselves

[1] See Appendix III.

of great value, even without notification. Examples of such provisions are the following :

(c) *Assistance to Parents with Blind Children.*

A grant to indigent parents of a blind child, for the special care of the child, will, in many cases, induce the parents to report the existence of the blind child to the competent authorities, and so create an opportunity for co-operation between parents and experts.

(d) *Nursery Schools for Blind Children (Residential and Non-residential).*

Such institutions exist in many countries, and will often, especially when the parents are indigent and care at the nursery school is provided free of charge and does not involve the ordinary consequences of poor-relief, encourage the parents to apply to the authorities or to the nursery schools. These nursery schools must therefore be made better known and the success of their work generally acknowledged.

(e) *Visiting Experts.*

Some parents will wish to keep a blind child at home, even if they are not able to give it the special care and education that it needs. In such cases, visiting experts should teach the parents the best way to handle the child. Instruction may be given orally or through short, clearly-set-out pamphlets.

(f) *Health Visitors (Visiting Nurses).*

Schemes for maternity and child welfare have been introduced in several countries, and under them health visitors visit children in the first year or the first few years of their life ; where these schemes have been introduced, they have had a very great influence upon the death rate and upon morbidity. Such a system will no doubt have its effect in making known the number of blind persons and, as has been pointed out, may well be used for the ascertainment of the blind child.

In several countries, the blind organisations themselves search out blind persons, and through their co-operation with the health visitors the most skilled and appropriate treatment can be secured for blind children at the earliest possible stage in their lives.

(g) *Conclusion.*

As the prevention of blindness and its medical treatment are outside the scope of this enquiry, the above-mentioned procedures combined (and in conjunction with other activities — lectures, broadcasts, pamphlets) will be the most important methods of improving the care of young blind children.

The Committee accepted the suggestions contained in the report.

VIII. Effects of the Economic Depression and Unemployment upon Children and Young People.

At its tenth session, in April 1934, the Child Welfare Committee devoted much of its time to a discussion of the effects of the economic depression and unemployment upon children and young people in the light of reports received from a number of Governments and of other information collected by the associations which are represented by assessors on the Committee. The problem was discussed under two main headings — namely, the effect of the crisis on the children of unemployed workers and the results of unemployment on young workers. A similar plan was adopted this year, though, in view of the discussion on unemployment among young persons by the forthcoming International Labour Conference, it was decided to concentrate the discussion mainly on this part of the problem.

Reports were received and considered from twenty Governments containing new particulars and information supplementing that which was furnished for the session of 1934.

Information was also received from several private organisations (the Women's International Organisations, the International Pan-American Child Welfare Institute and the Save the Children International Union).

A representative of the International Labour Office explained the draft recommendation on unemployment among young persons prepared by the International Labour Office for submission to the International Labour Conference at its session of June 1935, and the Committee, after having expressed its warm appreciation of the preparatory work done by the International Labour Office, decided to take this draft recommendation as a basis for its discussion.

Several delegates drew attention to the valuable practical experience acquired in their countries, both in combating the unemployment of young persons and in providing help and assistance for the children of the unemployed. Emphasis was laid by certain delegates on the necessity of maintaining, in all measures taken, the integrity of the family, and also on the necessity of regarding the problem as a moral as well as a material one.

Attention was drawn by individual delegates to a number of other points — in particular, that juveniles who are no longer in full-time attendance at school should be required to attend continuation courses providing a combination of general and vocational education ; that continuation-school education should take into account chiefly the requirements of the future agricultural and industrial worker ; that juveniles who have attended courses for the unemployed should continue attendance, if possible, after having found work ; that recreational and occupational centres for the young unemployed should be under the supervision of a qualified person, but it would be valuable for them to be organised as co-operative institutions with programmes arranged by the young unemployed ; that the compulsory school admittance age should be retarded by one year, in order to meet the financial difficulties involved in the extension of the school-leaving age ; that help should be given to those young people who are suffering most severely from the economic depression, " whatever their social *milieu* ", more particularly young professional workers ; and, finally, that action should be taken to restore the confidence of young people in a better future.

Other delegates emphasised the value of voluntary labour camps for the young unemployed, voluntary schemes of social service to provide occupation and recreation for the young unemployed, and improved facilities for training of girls in domestic economy.

Reference was made by several delegates to the full discussion on the subject of unemployed young people which took place at the last session of the Committee, and satisfaction was expressed that the draft recommendation of the International Labour Office had taken account, to a large extent, of the views expressed by the Committee. One delegate drew attention to the inapplicability, in educationally and industrially less advanced countries, of certain of the proposals of the draft recommendation — for example, the proposal that the compulsory school-leaving age should be fixed at 15 ; and another delegate expressed satisfaction that the draft recommendation contained no reference to the prohibition of the employment of women, and particularly of married women, as a solution of the problem of unemployment.

As a conclusion to its discussion, the Child Welfare Committee unanimously adopted the following resolution :

" The Child Welfare Committee has, with the greatest interest, taken note of the recommendations which have been prepared for the consideration of the International Labour Conference of 1935 on Unemployment among Young Persons, and, without entering into the detail of these proposals, wishes to emphasise the very great importance which the Committee attaches to efforts made to remedy the disastrous effects of unemployment, especially that among young people.

" In this connection, the Committee would draw attention to the discussion which took place at its last session on the subject of unemployed young people and would suggest that the International Labour Conference takes into consideration the views expressed by the Committee on this subject when considering the problem primarily from the angle of child welfare.

" The Child Welfare Committee desires to draw the attention of the International Labour Conference specially to the following matters :

" 1. The economic depression has had serious effects, not only on the young manual workers, but also on young persons belonging to other *milieux*, many of whom have suffered severely from the crisis. The unfortunate position of these young people deserves equal consideration with that of the manual workers.

" 2. In connection with the proposal to raise the school age, the needs of the industrial and agricultural worker call for special consideration. It is desirable that the education given during the extended period of education should have special reference to their future occupation.

" 3. In the case of the young industrial workers, some attempt should be made in the later years of education to prepare for the wise use of leisure, so as to compensate for the physical and mental effect of mechanised work and to develop by practical methods of civic instruction a realisation of their obligations towards the community."

As regards the effect of the crisis on the children of unemployed workers, further light was thrown on the measures being taken in different countries to alleviate the position of these children, both in the reports received from the Governments and in the statements made by members of the Committee. It was pointed out that, although the measures required to meet so large and complicated a problem must rest mainly with the Government, there was also a useful sphere for voluntary enterprise to supplement official action. The Polish delegate commented on the value of play-centres for children of school age, in which children can spend their free hours in conditions ensuring the development of their moral and physical welfare. On his proposal, the Committee adopted the following resolution :

" The replies received from Governments concerning the welfare of children of unemployed persons contain, *inter alia*, very interesting information on the establishment of special institutions for children of school age, which make it possible for such children to spend their free hours in conditions ensuring the development of their moral and physical culture and their recreation ; these institutions come within the framework

of open welfare institutions, the extension of which, in place of assistance by closed institutions, represents the general modern tendency in the social and pedagogic sphere.

" As the methods of organisation of these institutions and the pedagogic methods employed therein vary widely between one country and another, it is desirable that the Secretariat should collect documentary material on the matter which might subsequently enable the Child Welfare Committee to arrive at adequate conclusions."

The Roumanian delegate again drew the attention of the Child Welfare Committee to the unfortunate moral effect of unemployment on young people. The Committee, fully in sympathy with this aspect of the problem, desires to emphasise the importance of making every effort to strengthen the morale of these young people and of encouraging in them the hope of a happier future.

IX. Development of the Informative Rôle of the Secretariat in the Field of Child Welfare.

The Committee took note of the memorandum drafted by the Secretariat on the development of its informative activities in the field of child welfare (document C.P.E.498). This note is divided into two chapters : the first, written by the Chief Librarian, contains the plan of work of the Library, which had been instructed by the Assembly resolution to collect printed material and render it as accessible as possible to those wishing to consult it. The Committee decided that this chapter of the note should be annexed to the report on the work of the eleventh session.

Further, the Committee, having studied Chapter II: " Plan of Work of the Social Questions Section ", by the Director of that Section, desired to define the meaning of the resolution in which the Assembly instructs the Child Welfare Committee :

(1) To draw up a plan for collecting and utilising information regarding child welfare questions in accordance with the regulations in force for the organisation of the League of Nations Library ;

(2) To indicate the child welfare questions the study of which it considers should be approved by the Committee.

The Committee decided that paragraph (2) of this resolution should be interpreted as follows :

" To indicate the child welfare questions regarding which the Information Centre will be instructed by the Committee to collect information."

In order to begin work, the Committee decided that :

(*a*) All Governments will be invited to supply a list of the principal child welfare associations working in their country. To this invitation will be attached certain definite indications as to the character and competence of the associations regarding which the Committee desires to be informed ;

(*b*) Since the information supplied by all Governments in their annual reports is not homogeneous, the Secretariat will ask them all in future to send in their documentary material according to the following plan :

(1) Legislation on infants, children of pre-school age, children of school age, and adolescents of post-school age.

(2) Legislation regarding certain special categories of children, such as delinquent children, physically defective children, mentally defective children, etc.

(3) Legislation contemplated regarding points (1) and (2).

(4) Information regarding the practical application of legislation by the State, the local authorities, and the private organisations.

The Secretariat will examine the reports supplied to date and will inform the Committee of the type of information which they contain.

(*c*) The Secretariat will be invited to collect as complete documentary material as possible on the international associations dealing with any aspect of child welfare, either as their principal task or among their other activities.

(*d*) The Secretariat will get into touch with the International Labour Office, which already possesses a long experience in collecting and classifying documentation on specific subjects, in order to benefit as far as possible from the experience acquired by that organisation.

(*e*) In future, a periodical publication on child welfare might be considered, in order to keep Governments *au courant* of the interesting data collected by the Information Centre. This publication need not be considered during the first few years of the Information Centre's activities ; but in the event of a particularly interesting development being reported to the Information Centre, the latter might forthwith notify the members of the Committee by means of a brief roneographed communication.

(*f*) The Committee suggests that the questions regarding which the Information Centre should collect material in the first instance are :

(1) The age of marriage and consent ;

(2) The status of illegitimate children, the guardianship of such children ; the position of illegitimate children under the social insurance laws, and official documents not divulging illegitimate birth ;

(3) The recreational cinematograph ;

(4) Neglected and delinquent children, juvenile courts, auxiliary services, institutions ;

(5) Blind children.

Moreover, it might be advisable to collect, when the Committee decides to undertake the study of these questions, documentary material on the laws governing (*a*) the adoption of children, (*b*) public and private assistance to children, and the rôle of the social worker in connection with child welfare.

(*g*) It has also been suggested that the Information Centre should not confine itself to collecting legislation and administrative decrees regarding the various subjects enumerated above, but should also endeavour to obtain information on the practical application of such legislation.

In this connection, care should be taken to include information from some Eastern countries and to collect the literature published in the vernaculars, which would help to throw light on the special conditions existing in such countries.

In connection with a very complete document entitled " Classified Guide to Information on Social Work ", which Miss Whitton had submitted, the Committee desired to express its high appreciation of the trouble she had taken and to thank her for the very helpful contribution she had made in indicating lines of detailed classification. The Committee understands that her suggestion will be taken into practical consideration and be very useful to those who will be organising the new centre.

X. **Boarding-out in Families.**

About forty Governments have sent information regarding the various methods followed in boarding-out in families, in reply to the questionnaire prepared by the Child Welfare Committee at its tenth session and forwarded to them in virtue of a decision of the Council.

The Committee decided that this documentary material might be classified in the order of its various headings.

An introduction drawing attention to particularly interesting points should precede the tabulation of the information.

The Committee considered that the information supplied by Governments was in many cases very theoretical and limited to a bare reply to the questions raised. For the purpose of adding information of a more practical nature, the Secretariat should invite the members and assessors of the Committee to supplement the information received on the basis of their personal experience or by applying to men and women workers actively engaged in this branch of social service. This supplementary information would be communicated to the Rapporteur.

Mme. Vajkai, delegate of the International " Save the Children " Fund, was invited to be Rapporteur for this question and accepted the invitation.

M. Conti, representative of the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission, was present at the discussions on this question.

XI. **Report of the Liaison Officer of the Health Organisation.**

The report of the Health Organisation on various aspects of its work which interest the Child Welfare Committee was submitted by the delegate of Poland. He drew attention to certain publications of the Health Organisation and, particularly, to a study on infantile mortality, in which the author emphasised the importance of illegitimacy as a factor of mortality among young infants. With very few exceptions, the mortality of illegitimate children is higher than that of legitimate children.

On the basis of the data provided by this study, the delegate of Poland asked the Committee to maintain on its agenda the study of the situation of illegitimate children or, at any rate, of certain aspects of that problem.

He pointed out that the situation of illegitimate children depended largely on the law of the country in which they lived. Important documentary material had been collected, not only regarding the status of illegitimate children, but also concerning the guardianship of those children, their situation under social insurance laws and the issue of official certificates that did not divulge the fact of illegitimacy. This documentation had already been discussed by the Committee. The Rapporteur therefore expressed the hope that the Committee would be kept informed of the action which Governments had taken in pursuance of the resolutions adopted by the Committee on these various questions, and that the Agenda Sub-Committee would be instructed to decide what aspects of the problem of illegitimacy the Committee should study.

These proposals were adopted.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DELEGATES.

The delegate of Italy made a communication regarding the child welfare legislation of his country, and the delegate of Roumania gave information regarding the system applicable to minors in the draft Criminal Code, which has now been submitted to the Roumanian Senate.

XII. Budget.

The draft budget submitted by the Secretary *was adopted.*

XIII. Date of the Next Session.

It was decided that the twelfth session of the Child Welfare Committee should open on Monday, April 27th, 1936.

(Signed) Enrique J. GAJARDO, V.,
Chairman.

(Signed) Dr. Estrid HEIN,
Vice-Chairman.

(Signed) Eric Einar EKSTRAND,
Secretary, Director of the Opium Traffic and Social Questions Sections.

Appendix I.

CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

THE CINEMA FOR THE YOUNG.

(Memorandum by the British Delegate, Rapporteur for this Question.)

The Child Welfare Committee decided to select as one of its main subjects for discussion at its session in 1935 the extent to which the needs of the young in connection with the cinema are being met ; and the Secretariat was asked to collect from the members and assessors of the Child Welfare Committee as complete information as possible on this subject.

The value of the discussion next year will depend to a large extent on the preparatory work which can be carried out by the Secretariat, and for this purpose the fullest co-operation of the members and assessors is earnestly invited. It may be useful to indicate more precisely the range of the discussion and the matters on which information is specially required.

It is not intended that the Child Welfare Committee on this occasion should deal with the cinema on its *educational* side. Important as this aspect may be, it has already received a considerable amount of attention in many countries, and the Rome Institute is mainly occupied with studies in this particular field.

Much less attention appears to have been given to the *recreational* value and influence of the cinema for the young, and it is this aspect which the Child Welfare Committee is asked to consider. The cinema is admittedly the most popular form of entertainment for young and old alike. The growth of the industry has been remarkable and the extensive building in all countries of large cinemas accommodating audiences of many hundreds is one of the phenomena of modern life. This rapid development indicates the extent to which the cinema has secured a hold on the adult public, and there is an increasing demand for films which appeal to the adult. It is a matter of doubt whether, in the course of this development, the needs of young people have been fully recognised. The period of adolescence is plastic, and for that reason the cinema is more likely to leave permanent impressions for good or evil on the mind of the adolescent than of the adult. To what extent is the situation realised in different countries and what steps are being taken to meet it ?

The following questions, though not exhaustive, indicate the points on which information would be particularly valuable :

1. At what age are children and young persons admitted to ordinary cinemas ?

2. If children and young persons are admitted to ordinary cinemas without restriction, what steps are taken to prevent them from seeing unsuitable films ?

3. Have any enquiries been made in your country as to how often children and young persons attend cinemas and as to the general effect of the performances on their mentality and conduct ? Please summarise the results of any such enquiries.

4. Have any steps been taken to provide cinema performances specially (*a*) for children and young persons or (*b*) for the family ? If so, please give particulars as to how they are organised and financed, how the films are selected and what results have been obtained.

Examples of typical programmes should be given.

5. Have any enquiries been made in your country as to the types of films which appeal specially to children and young persons ? If so, please summarise the results of any such enquiries.

6. Have any steps been taken in your country by public authorities, by the trade, or otherwise, to provide films (other than purely educational films) which are specially suitable for children and young persons ? Has any use been made of the large store of children's classics, including fairy stories, animal stories, tales of school life, etc. ? If so, please give examples.

Have you any suggestions to make as to the way in which the production of such films could be encouraged ?

Appendix II.

C.P.E.505.

Geneva, April 25th, 1935.

CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

CINEMA FOR THE YOUNG.

Summary of Replies received to the Questions suggested by the Rapporteur.

Replies have been received so far only from eleven countries — namely, Belgium, United Kingdom, Denmark, India, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Roumania, Turkey, United States of America, Uruguay. Some of the replies are very brief, but fuller information is given for some countries — *e.g.*, United Kingdom, Japan, and the United States of America. In addition, an interesting report has been communicated by the representative of the International Women's Organisations.

The answers given to the questions suggested by the Rapporteur may be briefly summarised as follows :

1 AND 2. — AGE OF ADMISSION AND STEPS TO PREVENT CHILDREN SEEING UNSUITABLE FILMS.

Belgium.

Since 1920, children under 16 are not allowed to attend cinemas, except " family " performances which consist solely of films passed by a Commission annually appointed by the Government for this purpose. It is emphasised that this is not a board of censors. The reply states that, of 17,547 films examined by this Commission since its establishment in 1920, 12,188 have been passed, with or without excisions being required.

United Kingdom.

Children under 16, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, are not allowed to see films which are passed by the censors as suitable for exhibition to *adult* audiences and not for *universal* exhibition.

Denmark.

Children under 16 may only attend performances of films which are passed by the State censorship as suitable for them. When a performance is intended for adults, notice is given at the ticket-office and children are not admitted.

United States of America.

There is a considerable want of uniformity between the legislation of different States and cities, but generally there appear to be no restrictions on the attendance of children at the cinema. In some places, children are only allowed to attend if accompanied, or at certain times. In practically no instances are the regulations as to the films which may be exhibited framed with special reference to the needs of children, though in some States they are forbidden to see films which the Board of Censors has declared unsuitable.

India.

There are no specific restrictions, but in one province (Bombay) the censors are instructed to exclude films which are likely to familiarise young people with crime or undermine the teachings of morality.

Italy.

There is no absolute restriction, but the Commission responsible for licensing cinema performances may exclude children from certain performances. The management of the cinema must give notice in the advertisements. It is stated that certain welfare organisations are advocating a complete ban on the attendance of children under 14 at cinematograph performances.

Japan.

There are no legal restrictions, but some schools prohibit or regulate the attendance of their pupils at the cinema.

Efforts are also made by public authorities and voluntary associations to see that children attend the cinema only on special children's days.

Portugal.

Children under 5 are not allowed to attend a cinema at all unless accompanied. Children under 10 are not allowed to attend in the evenings unless accompanied. Otherwise, there are no restrictions except a general provision of the law against minors under 16 attending exhibitions " capable of being prejudicial to them ".

Roumania.

There are no precise restrictions, but there are regulations of the Ministry of Education, which apply to young people at school — that is to say, up to the age of 17. Scholars may only attend cinemas in the evening if they are in school uniform and accompanied by a parent or guardian. Apparently they are restricted to films of a cultural character.

Turkey.

There is an absolute prohibition of attendance at the ordinary cinemas up to the age of 12. Children over 6 may attend educational films during the day-time.

Uruguay.

Persons between the ages of 5 and 16 are only permitted to attend day-time performances of educational films or recreational films specially approved by the " Children's Board ". It is apparently difficult, in practice, to apply this regulation.

3. (A) Frequency of Attendance at Cinemas and (B) Effect on Mentality and Conduct

A. There is little precise information on either of these subjects, but replies from the following countries refer to one or other of them in more or less detail :

United Kingdom.

An enquiry in London covering over 21,000 children showed that 30% attend once a week, 9% twice a week, 48% at irregular intervals and 13% not at all. The figures for other towns in the United Kingdom are : Dundee, 80% at least weekly ; Galashiels, 75% at least weekly ; Edinburgh, 69% at least weekly ; Birkenhead, 45% at least weekly.

Boys are said to attend more frequently than girls.

Denmark.

Children are said not to form a large part of the public which attends cinemas, partly because the prices are on the high side and also because the cinemas rarely make special provision for them.

United States of America.

It is estimated that there are in weekly attendance at cinemas in the United States eleven million children under 14 and twenty-eight million persons under 21. In one study group it was found that the average attendance in an age range of 8 to 19 was once weekly and that 27% of the boys and 21% of the girls attended more than once weekly. In another group (Chicago) it was found that 90% attended regularly, 64% on an average once or twice weekly.

India.

It is stated that enquiries made in one province (Punjab) in 1927-28 led to the conclusion that the percentage of children was very small, but since then the percentage has considerably increased. In another province (Bihar and Orissa), it is stated that there is no such thing as a cinema habit among the children.

Italy.

The attendance of children at the cinema is said to be considerably on the increase.

Japan.

The following figures were collected by the Ministry of Education in an enquiry which covered 120 primary schools and 27 high schools and 29 girls' high schools in 10 large cities :

Number of Pupils who attend Cinemas ; Investigation of May 1934.

	High school	Girls' high school	Primary school Boys	Primary school Girls
Number of pupils included in the investigation	28,028	25,879	26,311	25,048
Number who go more than once a week	392	112	1,029	375
Percentage	1.0	0.4	3.9	1.1

B. The replies contain very little information as to the effect of the cinema on mentality and conduct.

In the reply from the United Kingdom, reference is made to a valuable enquiry made in London elementary schools in 1931-32. The following points are described in that report as well established :

(*i*) The morally questionable element in films is ignored by children of school age, and, in fact, bores them. It may do harm in particular cases, but there appears to be no widespread mischief. Other enquirers agree as to this.

(*ii*) The younger children for a time imitate in their play what they have seen on the films, but these external evidences of film influence are usually fugitive and confined to play.

(*iii*) Some children absorb film knowledge which seems to be kept in a mental compartment used in school only when an appropriate stimulus is applied.

(*iv*) The one distinct evil that is mentioned with such frequency by inspectors and teachers, and with such specific examples as to leave little doubt of its existence, is that children are often frightened at the films, and that the fear remains with them and causes dreams. The enquiry indeed brought out no other point on which there was definite evidence of harm.

(*v*) As a means of enlarging the children's experience (not by any means always in an undesirable way) and of giving clear-cut knowledge of certain kinds, the cinema is an effective instrument.

It may be interesting to note that, while the Roumanian reply suggests a connection between recent increases in juvenile delinquency and attendance at the cinema, the reply from the United Kingdom does not confirm this suggestion. On the contrary, the view is expressed that the cinema does more good than harm in this direction by keeping boys out of mischief.

In the United States of America, the effect of the cinema on the young has been the subject of exhaustive investigation, mainly under the auspices of the Motion Picture Research Council. These investigations were financed by the Payne Foundation and carried out in the years 1929 to 1932. The results are being published in nine volumes.

The conclusion is given briefly as follows :

" In general, the investigators found that the amount of information gained from motion pictures by children of all ages is very great, that a single picture may produce a change in attitude, that the influence of pictures on attitude is cumulative, and that these effects are substantially permanent. The influences of motion pictures in arousing and stimulating the emotions was discovered to be considerable. Frequent attendance at unsuitable pictures was held to have a detrimental effect on children's health. The general influence of motion pictures on conduct patterns and the significant part these pictures play in the informal guidance of children was noted."

4. Special Performances.

The information on this subject is, generally speaking, so sketchy and inadequate that it is difficult to generalise, except that it appears true to say that the provision of special performances is everywhere very deficient. The delegate of the Women's Organisations reports that special performances of a non-commercial character have recently been given in large cities and elsewhere in France at children's clubs, in parishes, etc. These have, however, been handicapped by financial difficulties. In Yugoslavia, committees representative of the parents and the schools have organised special cheap performances of selected films. This reply also refers to special performances in Lithuania.

United Kingdom.

The reply which contains much information on this point distinguishes between commercial and non-commercial performances. As regards the former, it is commonly the practice in the large towns, especially in the Midlands and North of England, to give special children's matinées, usually on Saturday afternoons, at a low price. The charges range from a penny to ninepence, the average being twopence.

Apart from these commercial performances, some of the local authorities are doing excellent work in providing special recreational programmes for children, with high-class features. Several instances are also mentioned in which voluntary bodies have organised series of performances for children.

The information is summarised as follows :

> " It will be seen from these particulars that commercial children's performances are very far from universal and non-commercial ones are so few in number as to be of negligible importance except as experiments. In many places, there are no special performances for children at all and, in others, including London, they are now relatively uncommon. In the great majority of the commercial performances, the programmes shown are selected with more consideration for economy and the convenience of the proprietor than the needs of the children. Yet special performances appear to offer the only means of meeting the needs of the child, for in the ordinary cinema they are necessarily subordinated to those of the adult."

Denmark.

Some cinemas organise special children's matinées on Saturday afternoons. Special performances are given at some of the schools, and performances of special instructional films with lectures have been organised on a voluntary basis at a concert hall in Copenhagen.

United States of America.

With the exception of a few experiments, there appear to have been few children's performances on either a commercial or voluntary basis.

Italy.

Much has been done under the present regime to organise special performances for children and young persons and for families. It is compulsory to include instructional and similar films produced by the " Luce " organisation in all performances.

Japan.

Special children's days have for several years been organised at selected cinemas in various of the great cities. The parents are encouraged to send their children to the cinemas only on these days. Apparently this scheme did not prove particularly successful at first, but has become more so since the co-operation of the teachers was obtained.

Roumania.

All cinemas are said to be required to give special " educational " performances on Sunday mornings. Other films of a " moral and interesting " type may also be exhibited.

5. Enquiries as to Types of Films which appeal specially to Children and Young Persons.

There is considerable information on the types of film which are liked or disliked by children, and it is gratifying to observe that there appears to be a substantial measure of international agreement amongst the children of different countries on this subject.

Italy reports that children prefer comic films, and instance films in which Ridolini and Charlie Chaplin formerly appeared or featuring Laurel and Hardy. After these, in order of popularity, come romantic and adventure films — *e.g.*, featuring Douglas Fairbanks or Tom Mix.

The results of a United States enquiry compare very closely with those of similar investigations in the United Kingdom.

The most popular films with boys are " westerns ", adventures, comedies and mysteries. The least popular are educational films, tragedies, romances and war films.

Girls prefer romances, comedies, " westerns ", tragedies, in that order, and give least support to war films, educational films, " adventures " and films of sport, in ascending order of popularity.

6. Provision of Special Films for Children.

Except for a few attempts to screen children's stories, fables, etc. (*e.g.*, Hans Andersen, Grimm), and the serials and " westerns " which are at least partly intended for children, it appears to be true to say that no special films have been or are being produced for children, otherwise than purely instructional ones. Where pictures based on children's classics — *e.g.*, " Alice in Wonderland ", " Treasure Island ", etc. — are produced, they are primarily designed for the adult public, and their appeal to children is, from the point of view of the producers,

largely incidental and accidental. The same is true of the universally popular silly symphonies and Mickey Mouse cartoons.

In Japan, efforts to stimulate production of suitable films — *e.g.*, by offering prizes — have been unsuccessful.

* * *

A number of suggestions are made :

United Kingdom.

It would appear that the tendency in the United Kingdom is for the cinema to cater more for the adult than the younger members of the community. The number of adult films has increased as the number of those passed for universal exhibition has decreased. Only a few of the children's classics have been drawn upon, and in many cases the treatment has been sophisticated so as to appeal less to children than to " grown-ups ".

The reply ends as follows :

" There are thus two main problems : (1) to stimulate the production of ' family ' films, films suitable for exhibition to adults and children alike : (2) to stimulate the production of special films for children. The latter is the more difficult though not necessarily the more urgent problem.

" At present it is as though the whole body of English literature were available for children, with the exception of the fairy stories, the school stories, the tales of Henty and Nesbit and Ballantyne and the like, and the great variety of children's classics from ' Swiss Family Robinson ' to ' Winnie the Pooh '. Both the need and the scope are great. Investigators say that the children are themselves aware of the deficiency. They not infrequently express their objections to the sophisticated films, which are often shown even at children's matinées, and they are found to respond enthusiastically to screen versions of their favourite stories — *e.g.*, ' Cinderella ' (both the German and English productions), ' Robinson Crusoe ', ' The Fifth Form at St. Dominics ' — while they resent the departures which are customarily made from the literal interpretation of the originals. They would like more animal stories, more stories about other children, more adventure stories of the ' western ' type. At present, however, their inability to pay more than a few pence for admission renders their demand ineffective.

" To increase the production of ' family ' films until the supply is adequate will be easier than to stimulate the production of special children's films. The cinema is a family entertainment, and it may be assumed that it is only necessary for the producers fully to appreciate the potentialities of the ' family ' market for them to supply it. The development of cinemas where patrons can be assured of seeing at all times programmes suitable for the whole family, such as is not unlikely to take place in the large towns, would obviously assist in this direction."

United States of America.

It is reported that there has been little effort on the part of producers in the United States in recent years to make films exclusively for the young, although the " serials " and " westerns " are intended for them. Particular mention, however, deserves to be made of the cartoons by Mr. Walter Disney, the silly symphonies and the Mickey Mouse comedies. These works of genius must surely constitute an international appeal to the children of all countries.

Italy.

The creation of " suitable recreational and educational cinemas for children under 14 " is advocated.

Portugal.

The starting-point should be the principle that " the cinema for the young should be different from the cinema for adults ". Films suitable for adults may be harmful to persons still in a formative state.

1. A centre might be established for the production of didactic and recreational films of a " beneficial " type, possibly in connection with the International Educational Cinematographic Institute. Each country should guarantee the exhibition of these films in schools and cinemas for youth.

2. Since the problem is an international one, uniformity of laws as to the attendance of children at the cinema is desirable.

Roumania.

The creation of a colour-cinematographic industry, with State aid, conditional on the production of films for youth.

The creation of a representative national film council and co-ordination of the activities of all official and private institutions interested in the problem.

Uruguay.

There should be propaganda in favour of cheap cinemas subsidised by the educational authorities. This would encourage the spread of educational cinemas.

C.P.E. 483.

Geneva, December 12th, 1934.

Appendix III.

CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

THE ASCERTAINMENT OF BLIND CHILDREN.

Report by the Secretariat.

At its ninth session, held in Geneva in April 1933, the Committee decided to hold an enquiry as to *the best procedure for ascertaining cases of blindness in children at the earliest possible age.* On May 22nd, 1933, the Council approved this decision and instructed the Secretary-General to request the Governments of States Members of the League of Nations to furnish data on this matter to serve as a basis for the Committee's discussions at its tenth session.

The following twenty-two countries complied with this request :

Union of South Africa	Italy
Australia	Japan
Austria	Norway
Belgium	New Zealand
United Kingdom (England and Wales)	Poland
Denmark	Roumania
United States of America	Siam
Finland	Sweden
Hungary	Switzerland
India	Czechoslovakia
Irish Free State	Turkey

The replies received may be divided into two groups :

1. Information concerning means at present employed for discovering children suffering from total or partial blindness ;

2. Suggestions made with a view to providing or strengthening means to this end.

The present document contains a summary of the information and suggestions and the replies of the various countries.

1. INFORMATION.

Registration in accordance with the Regulations.

The Hungarian Government states that in *Hungary* there is no need to seek out blind children. These are automatically traced by means of special columns for blind persons contained in the individual returns of the decennial census of the population or by means of the registration of such children which is carried out every two or three years by the municipalities at the request of the Central Inspectorate for Institutes of Therapeutic Pedagogy or the Central Royal Institution for the Blind " József nádor ".

Discovery of Cases of Blindness in Children by Public Education or School Authorities.

From the information received, it would appear that the chief agents for the discovery of cases of blindness in children are the public education and school authorities.

Cases of total or partial blindness are usually discovered at the medical examination which all children are required to undergo at the age at which compulsory school attendance begins or even earlier if they are presented for admission to school while below the regular age. Subsequent examinations lead to the discovery of children who become blind later. This is the case in *Austria* (Lower Austria and Styria), *Australia* (Queensland), *Belgium*, the *United Kingdom*, *Finland*, *Japan*, *New Zealand*, *Norway* and *Sweden*.

In the *Irish Free State* the authorities responsible for enforcing the law on school attendance discover the cases in which blindness is the reason for which a child of school age is not attending school.

In *Finland* the entry in the register of baptisms must state whether the child is blind, deaf, paralysed or in any way abnormal. It is thus possible, by this means, to discover cases of blindness in children.

In the *United Kingdom* (England and Wales) the discovery may be made as early as the age of two years in the case of children who are sent to nursery schools.

Discovery by the Public Health Authorities.

In the *United Kingdom* (England and Wales) the discovery is sometimes made by the Public Health Departments. In part of the *Irish Free State* there are medical treatment services in the schools, which may detect cases of total or partial blindness.

Discovery by the Public Registration Authorities.

In *Hungary* blind persons are automatically registered, *inter alia*, by means of special columns for the blind contained in the individual returns of the general census (see above, " Registration in accordance with the regulations ").

The *Swiss* Government points out that the Federal censuses provide a good means of discovering blind children.

In *Turkey* blind children are notified in the general census returns.

Discovery by Other Official Bodies.

In *Denmark* the discovery of such cases is made by the Social Committee, with which doctors and those engaged in educational work, whether official or private, are required to co-operate (Law of May 20th, 1933, Article 258).

In *Finland*, in the case of families who apply for public assistance, the provincial authorities usually discover blind children.

In *Hungary* the municipalities enter in a register every two or three years all blind children from five to eighteen years of age (see above, " Registration in accordance with the regulations ").

In *Italy* the task of discovering cases of blindness in children is left to the National Association for Maternity and Child Welfare.

In *New Zealand* the police are bound to report blind children whose place of residence they know.

Discovery by Private Persons or Organisations (some of which are subsidised from public funds).

In other countries the whole work of discovering cases of blindness in children would seem to be carried out by private organisations. This is the case in the *Union of South Africa*; *Australia* (Victoria, Queensland and Southern Australia); *Poland*, where the Association for Assistance to the Blind is assisted as regards certain aspects of its work by the competent Ministries and public authorities; and some of the *Swiss Cantons*. In the *United Kingdom* (England and Wales) the voluntary societies give valuable assistance in discovering blind children.

In *New Zealand* the officers of charitable or kindred institutions who are aware of the place of residence of blind children, and the occupants of a house in which any such child resides, are required to send notification of the fact to the Ministry.

Generally speaking, it may be mentioned that crèches, visiting nurses, public relief measures for indigent parents with blind children, private associations for the blind and a number of social institutions, all assist in discovering blind children at as early an age as possible.

For the *United States of America*, in view of the diversity of means employed by the several States for discovering and reporting cases of blindness in children below school age, the reader is referred to the section " United States ", under the heading : " Replies of the Various Countries ", page 26 in the present document.

2. Suggestions taken from Replies of Governments.

Some countries state that they favour the principle of the compulsory notification of cases of total or partial blindness — *e.g.*, *Australia* (New South Wales), *Irish Free State*, *New Zealand*, *Norway*, *Turkey*.

Other countries, going into greater detail, not only state that they favour the principle of compulsory notification, but add that such notification should be effected by doctors and health authorities. This is the view of *Belgium*, *Czechoslovakia*, *Roumania* and the *United States of America*.

Australia (Tasmania), *Norway* and the *United States of America* suggest that public education authorities and school-boards should be given wider powers, so that they may discover cases of blindness amongst children who are below school age.

British India (Burma and the Government of the United Provinces) states that provisions for notifying cases of blindness in children might be introduced in the regulations concerning the registration of births and deaths.

Australia (South Australia) and *India* (Government of the United Provinces) think that the work of the early discovery of cases of blindness in children should be undertaken by doctors, the vaccinating staff and private organisations; these countries, and also Turkey, are of opinion that, in addition, recourse should be had to all means of propaganda with a view to facilitating the discovery of such cases.

Among the measures which the *United States of America* suggest might be effective is the establishment of a State commission whose duties would include assembling, in co-operation with public and private agencies working for the blind, all available information in regard to pre-school children who are blind or who have seriously impaired vision.

Communications.

British India. (Government of Madras) does not consider that it is feasible at present to discover cases of blindness in children at an early age.

The *Siamese Government* does not think it necessary to submit any suggestions, as the number of blind children in Siam is negligible.

Replies of the Various Countries.

Union of South Africa.

No satisfactory machinery exists in South Africa for discovering cases of blindness in Young children.

The agencies from which most assistance may be expected, in the order of their importance, are, therefore, the various Church organisations, the associations for the blind, child welfare organisations and municipal health services.

Australia.

New South Wales.

The Education Department of the State of New South Wales has no general provision for the discovery of cases of blindness in children. To secure early and complete information regarding blind children, the institution of compulsory notification to a central governmental authority is desirable.

The census would be a means of obtaining the desired particulars, but the present form of census in Australia is of little practical value for this purpose. The instructions given in the form are to the effect that it is necessary to notify total blindness only — no person is to be recorded as blind who is partially but not totally blind. Since a considerable percentage of " blind " children have some degree of sight, literal interpretation of the instructions leads to many omissions in the notification of blind persons.

Victoria.

The Victorian Institute for the Blind has auxiliaries in the larger towns and cities in the State, which notify cases of blind children, both of school and pre-school age, which come to their notice. Publicity is given through the newspaper Press with the object of encouraging people with blind children to notify the Institute.

Queensland.

The Department of Public Instruction in Queensland states that it is aware that there is considerable difficulty in securing notification of the defect of blindness.

The Department of Public Instruction, therefore, periodically inserts a notice in the *Education Gazette*, a publication which is issued automatically to all teachers in the State, asking them to notify the Department of any case of serious deficiency in sight, knowledge of which may come to them. Teachers throughout the State are aware of the children who should be attending school and of any special circumstances affecting them, and the requirement that the Department be notified of any cases of blindness appears to have been successful in bringing to the notice of the Department of Public Instruction cases of sight deficiency which otherwise would probably have been undiscovered or unnotified.

Arrangements are now being made for the appointment of two part-time ophthalmologists to the Department of Public Instruction, who will travel the blight areas and recommend for transfer to the Wilson Ophthalmic Hostel any afflicted children who may be threatened with loss of sight.

South Australia.

As the best procedure for discovering cases of blindness in children, the Principal Medical Officer of the Education Department suggests the following :

1. Ask the local branch of the British Medical Association to publish in its monthly circular a request to all medical practitioners who become aware of the existence of a blind child to notify the Secretary of the British Medical Association, who would then notify a specified authority ; or they could report direct.

2. Ask the publisher of the *Medical Journal of Australia* to give prominence to this request from the League, stating at the same time the address to which the report should be sent.

3. Interest local bodies in the matter — *e.g.*, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Junior Red Cross, school committees, religious organisations, and all types of medical benefit and insurance societies.

The Chairman of the Central Board of Health submits the following suggestions :

1. Press announcements from time to time.

2. Wireless addresses broadcast under the auspices of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution, the Education Department, and the Red Cross societies.

3. Announcements in churches and Sunday schools from time to time.

4. Announcements in the *Educational Gazette*, disseminated through the schools.

5. Officers in the various public services, especially the police and postal officials in different centres, should be advised.

6. Private medical practitioners are brought into touch with young blind children, and announcements in the *Medical Journal of Australia* and other recognised medical journals would be helpful.

Practically all the medical practitioners in this State are members of the British Medical Association, and the regular *Monthly Notice* from the Association office to each member might be used as a channel of information.

The Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution gets into touch with most of its blind pupils by the following methods :

Circulars are sent to State school teachers, police officers, and the officials of Corporations and District Councils, and through the Medical Officers of the Education Department, who have occasion to come into touch with blind children.

The collectors of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution, when travelling through this State, frequently learn of the presence of blind children, and they approach the parents and point out to them the desirability of placing the child in the Institution. When the parents have been fully apprised of the conditions of the educational facilities given, there is really no difficulty.

Tasmania.

With regard to the enquiry as to the best procedure for discovering cases of blindness in children, the question of extending the provisions of the Education Act to include immediate notification of any defect upon discovery will be dealt with when any further amendment of the Act is under consideration.

Austria.

As regards the detection of cases of blindness in children in *Lower Austria*, the following procedure is observed :

The local school-boards are obliged by law to notify all cases of blindness in children of school age in their area at the beginning of each school year and to forward these notifications to the Provincial Government of Lower Austria through the district school authorities. The municipal authorities of the communes in which blind children reside are then requested to urge upon the parents the necessity of providing for the children's education, upbringing and vocational training, and if the parents desire their children to be admitted to the Institute for the Education of the Blind, the authorities in question help them to submit an application for admission. The expense is then borne by the parents or guardians or, if they are unable to do so, by the competent district welfare boards *(Bezirksfürsorgeräte)*.

In *Styria* no action is taken to deal with blind children until they are of school age. Each year the provincial School Council, at the request of the Graz Institute for the Blind, instructs all the school-boards of the province to notify the directorate of the Institute of any children of school age in their areas who are blind or have defective sight, and who are capable of instruction, but are not yet in an institution for the blind. The directorate of the Institute then gets into touch with the legal representatives of these children, and it is then ascertained whether the child's parents are able or willing to pay for its education, or whether assistance must be given out of public funds.

Belgium.

Compulsory notification by the doctor would be the best means of discovering cases of blindness in children.

There can be no question of professional secrecy. Blindness cannot be concealed. It is plain to everyone, and the child's parents have nothing to gain by hiding it.

The parents cannot be relied upon to notify it. Those belonging to the uneducated and to the prosperous classes alike will attach no importance to notification.

The opening of health dispensaries would render inestimable services, but their work should cover the whole country.

Education is compulsory in Belgium from six years of age, and all children undergo a medical examination, when all blind children or children with defective sight are discovered, without there being any question of professional secrecy ; it is, however, already too late to begin educating them along the special lines appropriate to their case. (Information furnished to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Comité consultatif pour l'Amélioration du Sort des Aveugles.)

United Kingdom (England and Wales).

Under the Blind Persons Act, 1920, it is the duty of every County Council and County Borough Council to make provision for the welfare of the blind in their areas. The whole country is covered by an organisation under which the work is carried out either by the local authorities direct or through the agency of voluntary societies. The agency of voluntary societies is used in by far the largest part of the country. It is the duty of these voluntary societies or the local authority to keep a register of all blind persons from infancy upwards.

In practically every area home teachers of the blind are employed to visit and instruct the blind, and these officers are constantly on the look-out for hitherto unknown cases of blindness. There are about 450 home teachers of the blind in England and Wales.

Many voluntary societies have a number of honorary representatives (some have one in every village), and any blind child seen or heard of by them is brought to the notice of the blind society.

Quite distinct from the blind organisation is the organisation for maternity and child welfare throughout the country, with its officers called health visitors. When they come across cases of blindness among young children, they report them to the blind welfare authority.

A certain number of cases come to the knowledge of the public health department of the local authority and become known to the blind organisation through them.

In some areas there is a good liaison between the almoner department of the ophthalmic hospital and the voluntary society for the blind, and blind children are notified to the society.

In addition to the discovery of cases of blindness in children through the blind welfare organisation, there is the discovery of blind children through the educational organisation.

Such discovery mainly affects children of the age of five years and upwards and is a statutory duty imposed by the Education Act, 1921, upon the local education authorities. It is carried out in the following ways :

(1) By school medical officers at the times prescribed by the regulations of the Board of Education for the medical inspection of school children, viz. :

(*a*) On first admission to public elementary schools ;

(*b*) On attaining the age of eight years ;

(*c*) On attaining the age of twelve years.

(2) Through the medium of school nurses and teachers, who can at any time refer special cases to the school medical officer for examination.

(3) Through the medium of school attendance officers, when they enquire into the cases of children who are not presented at the statutory age for admission to school. When the reason for non-admission is one of physical defect — *e.g.*, blindness — the child is referred to the school medical officer for examination.

Children are, however, frequently presented for admission to school before the statutory age — *i.e.*, five years in the case of public elementary schools or schools for the blind, and seven years in the case of schools for deaf, defective and epileptic children. Such cases will be discovered by the local education authority on the child's entry to the school unless they have previously been discovered through some other medium. Similarly, children presented for admission to nursery schools, which cater for children between two and five years of age, will be discovered at, or shortly after, the age of two years.

Denmark.

According to the Law of May 20th, 1933, on public relief, paragraph 258, " the Social Committee reports to the Institute for the Blind all children who are blind or whose sight is so defective that they cannot follow the instruction given in the ordinary schools ". In addition, " all doctors who, in the exercise of their profession, observe blindness or defective sight in children under sixteen years must report the matter to the Social Committee of the commune ; the heads of State or communal schools and private teachers are under the same obligation ".

United States of America.

At the time of the 1930 Federal census of population, 504 blind children under six years of age were found. During the same year a study made by the American Foundation for the Blind in seventeen widely scattered States brought to light a somewhat larger number of blind infants and pre-school children. On the basis of this study, it was estimated that there were approximately 800 such children in the United States. Current reports from a number of States show that the number of blind pre-school children known to the State Department of Public Welfare or to the State Commission for the Blind is nearly twice as large as the

number found in the Federal census. It is probable, therefore, that the estimate made by the American Foundation for the Blind represents the situation more accurately.

Methods used to discover Cases of Blindness in Children.

There is much variation throughout the country in the resources available for the discovery and reporting of blind children of pre-school age. The most important means for obtaining information as to these children are through the field services of State Commissions for the Blind, the activities of private organisations concerned with problems of the blind, reports required by health authorities from physicians as to children who are blind at birth, and attendance of children with impaired vision at special eye clinics or other health clinics. Special enquiry is made in the annual school census of most States as to children of school age who are blind, as school attendance of these children is compulsory except in a few States. Occasionally the school census law requires, as in Ohio, that an enumeration should be made at the time of the census of all pre-school children who are blind, deaf, or crippled.

More than half the States have created by statute a board of citizens to provide services for the blind. This board is usually designated the State Commission for the Blind. The work of these commissions is supported, entirely or in part, by appropriations from State funds. Three commissions are not active at the present time, because no appropriation has been made. In general the duties of the commissions are to provide medical assistance and training and vocational opportunities to visually handicapped persons, to administer State relief for the blind when this is provided, to further measures for the prevention of blindness, and to maintain a complete register of blind persons of all ages. In a few States the commissions are responsible for the development of local resources for services to the blind. The reports of some of these commissions indicate that every effort possible is made to study the needs of the blind throughout the State and to keep an accurate and complete register. This is achieved by close co-operation with all the agencies having contact with blind persons, as well as by information gathered in various communities by members of the State staff who are teaching or giving other assistance to blind persons in their own homes. In some States, because of limited staff and funds, the activities of the commission are more limited, and it is probable that little information about blind children is available to it.

Another public welfare measure which may have some influence on the early discovery of blind infants is the enactment in thirteen States of laws authorising the use of State funds for the maintenance and care of blind babies. In all but two of these States the law specifies that the payment is for care in a nursery or institution, a particular institution being named in four States. It is possible that a few blind infants that otherwise would remain unknown are brought to the attention of officials because of this provision for their care.

It is difficult to judge of the extent to which private associations interested in the blind have undertaken to search for children needing assistance. Associations of interested persons, whose work is supported by private contributions, have been organised for national, State-wide, or community services for the blind. In some States branches of the State association or independent association or organisation are to be found in many communities throughout the State. In other States they are located only in the large cities. These organisations undertake a variety of activities. Some are concerned with a particular service, such as providing medical care, maintaining a workshop, or similar pieces of work. Others have a much broader programme, including preventive work and the development of educational opportunities for the blind, as well as a variety of special services to meet different needs. The closer the co-operation between these volunteer organisations and the official State commissions, the greater is the possibility of a comprehensive State programme and the discovery of all children needing assistance in their own homes.

In a special enquiry made at the time of the Federal census in 1920, it was found that ophthalmia neonatorum was the cause of blindness in about 20 per cent of the cases of blind children under five years of age for whom this information was reported. The number of cases of blindness from this cause is steadily decreasing, as methods of prevention have been adopted throughout the country. In a few States practically no cases are to be found. At the present time only five States have failed to require the use at birth of a prophylactic to prevent infection.

As part of the programme for elimination of this preventable cause of blindness, the laws of forty-five States require the reporting to the proper health authorities of all infants who are blind at birth or have serious eyes conditions ; reporting applies only to gonorrhœal infection in some States. If the provisions of these laws were actually carried out, fairly complete

information would be available in State and local health departments as to blind or potentially blind infants.

In 1930 a committee of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness made an enquiry of health officials as to the extent to which reports were actually made by hospitals, physicians, nurses, midwives, and other persons. About a fourth of the health officials considered the reporting reasonably complete; the remainder described it as being poor. The major purpose of reporting is to assure follow-up of the care and treatment for the eye condition. Inadequate follow-up of cases was also shown by this study.

In a few localities the discovery of blind persons has been accomplished through special clinics for the diagnosis and treatment of eye difficulties. These clinics are widely advertised, and every effort is made to bring to them all persons with seriously impaired vision. The extent to which blind children have been discovered through these clinics is not known. Similar clinics for crippled children have brought to the attention of physicians a large number of crippled children previously unknown.

In the census of school children taken annually in most States, the inclusion of physically handicapped pre-school children is an exception rather than the general rule. In Ohio the law requires that all physically or mentally handicapped persons from one to twenty-one years of age should be included in the census. Ohio has been outstanding among the States in the provisions made for special classes in day schools for all types of physically handicapped children. According to school authorities, this special census has made it possible for many children to be given treatment or training before entering the schools for education in braille classes. It has also been of assistance in making decisions as to the need for establishing special classes for handicapped children in different localities. In Cleveland (Ohio), a visiting teacher has been assigned to assist parents in understanding the problems of the pre-school child handicapped by blindness, and the best methods for developing wholesome habits and attitudes, which will prevent his being set apart from normal children. It is probable that the school census enumerator concerned primarily with children of school age may fail to find all handicapped children of pre-school age. Even with this limitation the school census would seem to be a valuable means for discovering these younger blind children.

Important steps in the discovery of cases of blindness in children of pre-school age would seem to be the following :

(1) Establishment of a State commission whose duties would include assembling, in co-operation with public and private agencies working with the blind, all available information in regard to pre-school children who are blind or who have seriously impaired vision.

(2) Reporting to health authorities of all infants with eye conditions needing medical care.

(3) Inclusion of visually handicapped children of pre-school age in the school census.

Finland.

(*a*) When a child is presented for baptism, the entry in the church register must show whether it is blind, deaf, paralysed, or abnormal in any other respect.

(*b*) As children reach school age, which is seven years, the heads of the primary schools are required each year to inform the school authorities of any children on their registers who, for any reason, are unable to attend an ordinary school, and notification must be given as to blind children also at the same time.

(*c*) If the family of a blind child applies for public relief, its blindness usually comes to the knowledge of the cantonal authorities as a result of the enquiries which are made before relief is granted.

Hungary.

There is no need in Hungary for measures for the discovery of cases of blindness in children, as they are registered in accordance with the regulations in the following manner :

(1) The registration of blind children takes place every ten years concurrently with the census of the population. The individual census forms contain special headings for the blind, and the particulars entered under these headings are classified by groups, according to the sex, age and religion of the blind person. These particulars may be obtained from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

(2) With a view to the registration of the blind between five and eighteen years of age, the Central Inspectorate of Institutes of Therapeutic Pedagogy or the " József nádor " (Archduke Palatine Joseph) Central Royal Institution for the Blind asks the municipalities, every two or three years, to proceed to the registration of blind children of this category and to submit statistics. On the basis of these statistics, the above-

mentioned Inspectorate and Institution keep registers in which are entered the particulars supplied by the municipalities concerning each blind child. At the same time, the parents of blind children between the ages of five and eighteen are given advice as to the education to be given to their blind children and information regarding the conditions of their admission to one of the institutions for the blind.

(3) It is generally recognised in Hungary that the education of blind children is a matter of public concern. In most cases, the parents come of their own accord, even before the normal statutory registration is made, to have their blind children entered in the register. If the blind child is taken to one of the children's homes or to any of the university clinics, the latter immediately take the necessary steps for placing the child in one of the institutions for blind children.

India.

Government of Madras.

The Government considers that there is no practicable method of discovering the existence of blind children at a very early age.

Government of Bombay.

The Government of Bombay has no suggestion to make in regard to how blindness or partial blindness may be discovered in the case of children who are not attending educational institutions.

Government of Bengal.

It is stated that the question of evolving a procedure for discovering cases of blindness in children is not one which could usefully be taken up by this Government in its present financial condition. Funds are lacking for any such activity and for providing assistance or educational facilities for any blind children who might be traced.

Government of the United Provinces.

The Government has made no provision for the care and education of blind children who are under the care of certain private institutions. The existence of such children can, however, be discovered with reasonable promptness and accuracy through the agencies of the vaccination staff and the Police Department. The former would be the best agency for recording cases of blindness in children ; the latter could make a note of those children who are born blind in the course of their work of registration of births in rural areas.

Government of Punjab.

No organised efforts are made in this province for discovering cases of blindness in children.

Government of Burma.

It might be possible to discover cases of blindness at birth by making the necessary provision in the byelaws and rules framed under the Municipal and Burma Village Acts for the registration of births and deaths ; but there is no means at present whereby blindness occurring in children after birth can be discovered, nor does it appear that any efficacious method can be devised, apart from such a measure as inspection by attendance officers under a compulsory Education Act.

Government of Bihar and Orissa.

As there is no machinery available in this province for discovering cases of blindness in children at the earliest possible age, the local Government is not in a position to suggest the best means to attain that end.

Government of the Central Provinces.

The Government believes that blindness in children is not prevalent in this province and that the number of those born blind is very small. It would seem therefore hardly worth while to set up machinery, which must necessarily be somewhat elaborate, for the discovery of such children until such time as it may be possible to make adequate provision for their treatment and education.

Irish Free State.

The Government of the Irish Free State are of opinion that the best method by which the existence of blind children could be discovered at the earliest possible age would be the compulsory registration of all cases of congenital or acquired blindness. In the event of the Child Welfare Committee of the League of Nations sharing this view, and arriving at the conclusion that compulsory registration of congenital or acquired blindness should be adopted, the Government of the Irish Free State would be prepared to consider favourably the introduction of legislation placing the onus of reporting cases of congenital or acquired blindness upon parents or guardians.

In this connection it may be added, for the information of the Child Welfare Committee, that certain schemes are already in operation in the Irish Free State whereby the existence of blind children is discovered and their welfare provided for. School Treatment Service Schemes under the Public Health (Medical Treatment of Children) (Ireland) Act, 1919, have been established in four county boroughs, one borough, and in eighteen out of the twenty-seven county areas. Under these schemes, an eye test is carried out in the case of each child

submitted for medical examination. Most of the schemes provide for the appointment of ophthalmic surgeons who are competent to ascertain the degree of blindness in the case of children examined by them. These schemes apply only to school-going children in elementary schools. On the other hand, the schemes mentioned operate in districts in which the school attendance in public elementary schools is 406,000. As the total elementary school-going population in Ireland is approximately 503,000, about 80 per cent of the school-going children in elementary schools are inspected under the existing scheme.

It may be pointed out here that the age period for admission to public elementary schools in the Irish Free State is three to eighteen years of age. The School Attendance Act, 1926, which enforces attendance at school for primary instruction, applies only to children between six and fourteen years of age, and only a relatively small percentage of the children in attendance at public elementary schools are under six years of age. So far as the educational authorities are concerned, therefore, it is not possible for them to discover the existence of blind children until they reach the age for compulsory attendance at school — *i.e.*, six years of age. Cases in which the failure to attend is due to blindness could then be ascertained from the enforcing authority under the School Attendance Act.

Italy.

It is one of the principal tasks of the National Association for Maternity and Child Welfare to discover any cases of blindness that do not come to the knowledge of the authorities through the child's parents.

Japan.

Considerable efforts are being made in Japan for the purpose of discovering cases of blindness in children at the earliest possible age, but no general method for this particular purpose has been established as yet.

In practice, however, education being compulsory for every citizen, blind children are discovered at the latest when they attain school age — *i.e.*, six years —, when every child has to undergo a thorough physical examination.

Furthermore, for those who become blind after that age, the annual physical examination for all school children will serve the same purpose.

Norway.

The Act prescribes that the school-boards shall report to the director of the Blind School the existence of all blind children in the parish who are of the age mentioned in the Act. Experience shows every year, however, that these regulations are not effective or sufficiently carried out. There ought also to be a certain inspection of blind children before they reach school age, and the best possible use ought to be made of the Children's Home, so that preference in admission is given to those children who are most in need of it.

The Norwegian Association for the Blind has therefore several times requested the authorities to make it a rule that all blind children must be reported as soon as blindness is ascertained. It has not yet been possible to carry through this reform, however. The Association tries to get the best possible information for its index of the blind through other channels — *e.g.*, by applying to physicians and midwives. It is clear, however, that the information obtained will always be incomplete as long as notification is not compulsory by law.

The simplest remedy might be to give the school-boards definite instructions to report. Every year a census of children for the elementary schools is held, and it would therefore involve no work or extra expense worth mentioning to report blind children at an earlier period. As things now are, they are often not even reported at the proper time to the Blind School, so for the purposes of the latter also such instructions would seem to be necessary.

New Zealand.

Under the Education Act, notification of blind children is compulsory, but not until the child is over six years of age. The enactment reads as follows :

> " Every parent, teacher of a school (either public or private), constable, or officer of a charitable or kindred institution who is aware of the place of residence (either temporary or permanent) of a deaf, blind, feeble-minded, or epileptic child, and the householder in whose house any such child resides, shall send notification of the fact to the Minister, giving the name, age, and address of the child ; and if any such person neglects or fails to comply with this provision, such person shall, on conviction thereof, be liable to a fine not exceeding one pound, or in the case of a second or subsequent offence, whether relating to the same or another child, not exceeding five pounds."

At times, however, parents communicate with the Education and Health Departments asking for information and advice, and medical practitioners also at times communicate with these Departments regarding blind children under the age of six years.

There exists in New Zealand no established procedure for the discovery of cases of blindness in children prior to school age.

Parents are, as a rule, reticent in voluntarily informing the New Zealand Institute for the Blind that they have blind children, usually because they are hoping against hope that some form of treatment may restore vision, and hesitating to admit that their child is permanently blind. In other cases, reticence is apparently induced by some sense of shame.

In addition to the very few totally blind children under school age, there are probably a number whose vision is so defective that they may not in due course be able to receive their education in an ordinary school, but who nevertheless have ample vision for running about playing with other children and enjoying the years of their childhood. Their deficiency sometimes remains undiscovered until they come to attend school, and frequently the extent of the deficiency could only be ascertained, and then only with difficulty, under a specialist's examination.

The New Zealand Institute for the Blind likes to make contact with totally blind children of pre-school age. It then remains in touch with the parents, and instructs them as best it can in the proper treatment of the child.

The only suggestion which the Institute can make in this connection is that total or nearly total blindness in children under a specified age should be made a notifiable condition.

Poland.

The Association for the Assistance of the Blind, with the help of the competent Ministries and public authorities, collects statistics and detailed information with regard to blind children by means of suitable questionnaires. It then gets into touch with their families with a view to instructing them in their obligations towards and treatment of blind children.

It should also be mentioned that one of the Association's many duties is to keep in touch with the ophthalmic hospitals for the purpose of looking after children who, on leaving the hospital, have to be placed in schools for the blind. It also seeks out blind children and endeavours to persuade their guardians to give them a suitable education.

Roumania.

In Roumania, there is an Institute for the Blind, established by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth thirty years ago, and possessing full modern technical equipment for the care of the blind and their vocational training.

Dr. J. Cantacuzène, member of the League Health Committee and Minister of Social Welfare, issued three years ago a decision making it compulsory for parents to declare cases of blindness in their children.

It is proposed that officials should be instructed to collect index-cards for blind children and forward them to the prefectures and municipalities.

In order to ensure the early discovery of cases of blindness among children, health officers should be bound to report, on special index cards, all such cases coming to their notice. They should send these cards to the prefectures or town councils, which should in turn immediately inform the Ministry of Public Relief.

Sweden.

The school-boards of the various parishes have to see that every child whose sight is so impaired as to prevent it from usefully taking part in the ordinary school work is sent to a school for the blind.

Switzerland.

Up to the present it has not been necessary for the Federal authorities to occupy themselves with enquiries as to cases of blindness in children, as this question is within the competence of the cantonal educational authorities.

It would seem, however, to be very easy to discover cases of blindness in children. They are, in fact, notified at the time of the decennial Federal census of the population. In addition, the cantonal or regional associations of the Swiss Union for the Welfare of the Blind are very well organised and are able to give effective help in searching out persons suffering from blindness. These associations have, moreover, a special officer in all places of any size.

Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak authorities have already had under consideration the question of the best means of discovering cases of blindness in children as early as possible. It was suggested that lists of blind children should be drawn up at the time of vaccination, which is compulsory in the Czechoslovak Republic, but this suggestion was not adopted. A proposal that the district medical officers should notify any blind children with whom they came into contact in the discharge of their duties is also being considered.

Turkey.

Children afflicted with blindness are entered in the general census registers. This is how such cases are discovered. The competent authorities do not apply, and do not contemplate applying, any other system. The legislation in force is indeed silent on this particular point, a fact which renders the detection of cases of blindness in children extremely difficult.

It would, however, be possible, in our opinion, to discover such cases with the assistance of the public health organisations in the following manner :

(1) By requiring parents to notify children born blind ;

(2) By requiring the notification also of cases of subsequent blindness and infantile ophthalmia ;

(3) By creating special organisations whose duty it would be to have cases of blindness that have been notified among children of pre-school age supervised by visiting nurses ;

(4) By a system of continuous supervision or examination, to be entrusted to the anti-trachoma committees, whose duty it would be to search out and register blind children in a specified district.

Appendix IV.

EXTRACT FROM THE NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS INFORMATIVE ROLE IN THE FIELD OF CHILD WELFARE.

C.P.E.498.

Chapter I. — Plan of Work of the Library.

The Library having been instructed by a resolution of the fifteenth Assembly to collect and keep up-to-date documentary information on the child welfare questions dealt with by the Social Section, the following plan of work has been drawn up.

The objects which the Library has in view are :

1. To collect printed material (monographs, laws, statistics, reports and Minutes, articles in periodicals, Press cuttings) from books and from Government and private publications, both special and general.

2. To enable persons consulting the Library to make full use of this information by means of suitable bibliographical material (catalogues, author and subject indexes, etc.).

3. To prepare bibliographical publications, when occasion arises, such as " reading lists ", annotated bibliographies, analytic lists of laws, etc.

This cannot be achieved simply by collecting special material ; a considerable amount of general material will be required. The Library of the League of Nations can place at the Centre's disposal material containing a good deal of information on child welfare questions which has not hitherto been extracted and made available, there having been no demand for this work. In addition, the Library's readers have access to the collections of the Library of the International Labour Office.

A survey of the Library's general resources will give a better idea of the very great assistance which it will be able to afford the Information Centre (see Appendix I).

The Library is anxious that the printed material on child welfare questions to be found in its general and special collections and in the files of the Secretariat's archives should be presented as attractively as possible. For that purpose it proposes the following practical measures :

I. *Opening of a Special Room in the Charge of a Trained Staff.*

II. *Collection of Material.*

The whole of the printed material relating solely to child welfare questions will be collected in that room.

The Library naturally cannot undertake to collect complete documentary material on *all* child welfare subjects. It will endeavour to obtain as much material as possible on general problems and will await the Child Welfare Committee's instructions as to the selection of particular problems on which special material would seem necessary.

This material will consist of :

(*a*) *Books*, works of reference (encyclopædias, year-books, directories, etc.), Government publications, League of Nations publications, reports of societies, congresses, etc.

The Social Section has a special fund (the Richmond Fund) by means of which the Library can make the necessary purchases.

(*b*) Collection of *periodicals* : those periodicals for the current year which are the Social Section's special concern will also be kept in this room. This collection will be reorganised and enlarged.

(*c*) In addition, *files* for ephemeral material, monographs not forming part of a special collection, texts of laws, separate reprints of articles or the articles themselves if

circumstances permit, Press cuttings, printed extracts from the archives, etc. The files will also include a copy of the reports specially drawn up, at the request of the Social Section, by associations or charitable bodies not publishing printed material, whenever the organisation in question authorises its direct communication to the public.

These files will constitute a collection of up-to-date first-hand material in keeping with the most recent tendencies in research work.

III. *Arrangement of the Documentary Material.*

1. As the material in *book* form is included in the Library's general collection, it fits into the system of classification already in use. The Library has adopted the universal decimal system of classification established by the International Bibliographical Institute at Brussels (last edition, 1927-28) — that is to say, the expanded Dewey system.

The various aspects of child welfare will be placed in different numerical groups (legislation, assistance, education, public health, etc.). That, however, will not prevent all the works directly and exclusively concerned with child welfare questions being kept together on the shelves.

2. On the other hand, it would not be appropriate to incorporate in the general collection the documentary material specially collected by the Centre in the form of *files*. Accordingly, such material will not, like the book, be automatically included in the general scheme of classification, but will be arranged in accordance with whichever system may appear the most likely to facilitate its use.

IV. *Bibliographical Material.*

The practical value of a collection is in direct ratio to the ease with which it can be consulted. A collection cannot be turned to really good account unless completed by a card index (that is to say, a catalogue) which makes it possible to find out rapidly what it contains, and this is specially important in cases where individual documents have to be supplemented by reference to special sections of general works (for example, paragraphs 27 and 28 in the annual report of the South African Prisons Department, regarding delinquent children and children's reformatories).

It is, moreover, only through systematic catalogues (see (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*) below) that the various sources of documentary information can be properly co-ordinated. The systematic arrangement of the various catalogues will be similar to that adopted for the documentation in files.

These specialised catalogues will be as follows :

(a) *Books.* — An author and subject catalogue which will mention, not only books having a direct bearing on child welfare, but also books which, though belonging to other sections of the Library, contain information on child welfare questions.

(b) *Periodicals.* — A classed catalogue containing articles on child welfare from both special reviews and all other reviews received by the Library. Special attention will be devoted to the indexing of periodicals, in order that the catalogue may be an accurate record of all articles appearing in the special or general Press.

(c) *Legislation.* — Card index of legislation, facilitating reference to child welfare legislation in a given country or on a given question. This card index will be based upon the particulars given in the collections of laws and the official gazettes available in the Library. It will be kept up to date by means of the information supplied to the Child Welfare Committee by Governments and also by the regular indexing of official journals and texts of laws.

(d) *Publications of Societies.* — A catalogue of reports and other publications in the Library's possession, issued by international and national associations, public and private, which deal with child welfare questions.

V. *Bibliographical Publications.*

The sections devoted to child welfare questions in the Library's regular publications will be enlarged, and whenever it seems advisable the Library will prepare special publications (reading lists, bibliographies, etc.) such as it prepares for other Sections of the Secretariat.

(Signed) T. P. Sevensma,

Chief Librarian.

March 1935.

TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE.

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE FOURTEENTH SESSION

(Geneva, May 2nd to 9th, 1935.)

The fourteenth session of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee opened at Geneva on May 2nd, 1935, M. Enrique GAJARDO, delegate of Chile, being in the Chair, and Dr. Estrid HEIN, delegate of Denmark, acting as Vice-Chairman.

Composition of the Committee.

Government Delegates:

M. E. GAJARDO *(Chairman)*	*Chile.*
Dr. Estrid HEIN *(Vice-Chairman)*	*Denmark.*
His Excellency Count CARTON DE WIART M. I. MAUS, technical expert	*Belgium.*
Mr. S. W. HARRIS Miss J. I. WALL, substitute delegate	*United Kingdom.*
M. MARTINEZ-AMADOR Doña Matilde HUICI	*Spain.*
Dr. Martha ELIOT	*United States of America.*
His Excellency M. REGNAULT M. BOURGOIS, substitute delegate	*France.*
Begam SHAH NAWAZ	*India.*
Count Ugo CONTI-SINIBALDI Princess GIUSTINIANI-BANDINI, assistant delegate	*Italy.*
His Excellency M. CHODZKO Mme. WOYTOWICZ-GRABINSKA, substitute delegate	*Poland.*
His Excellency M. PELLA Princess CANTACUZÈNE	*Roumania.*
M. Celâl HAZIM	*Turkey.*
His Excellency M. BENAVIDES	*Uruguay.*

Assessors:

Mme. AVRIL DE SAINTE-CROIX	Women's International Organisations.
Mlle. LAVIELLE	International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues.
Mlle. Andrée KURZ	International Federation of the " Amies de la Jeune Fille ".
Mr. S. COHEN	Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls, Women, and Children.
Mr. F. SEMPKINS	International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children.
Mlle. DE MEYER, later replaced by Mlle. THURLER	International Catholic Association for the Protection of Young Girls.

Liaison Officer:

Mme. THIBERT	International Labour Office.

Secretarial:

M. E. E. EKSTRAND	Director of the Opium Traffic and Social Questions Sections.

Changes in the Composition of the Committee.

The following changes have taken place in the composition of the Committee since the thirteenth session.

Miss Grace Abbott, delegate of the United States of America, having resigned, Miss Katharine LENROOT, Chief of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, has been appointed member of the Advisory Commission. Miss Lenroot was replaced at the fourteenth session by Dr. Martha M. ELIOT, Assistant Chief of the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor.

The Government of India appointed the Begam SHAH NAWAZ, replacing Mrs. Subbarayan.

Mme. de Montenach being unable to be present at the session, the International Catholic Association for the Protection of Young Girls was represented by Mlle. DE MEYER, who was later replaced by Mlle. THURLER.

Mr. Bascom Johnson and Dame Rachel Crowdy were unable to be present this year.

The Chairman informed the Committee that, on the unanimous wish expressed by the Child Welfare Committee, the Council of the League of Nations would be requested to invite the Japanese Government to continue its collaboration with the Committee in future.

In view of the interest which the Chinese Government takes in the question of women of Russian origin in the Far East, an invitation was issued to Dr. Hoo Chi-Tsai, Director of the Permanent Office of the delegation of China to the League of Nations, to attend the discussions on this matter, as he had been present last year when the question was dealt with by the Committee. Dr. Hoo Chi-Tsai, being absent from Geneva, was represented by the First Secretary of the Permanent Office, M. CHEN-TING, who was also requested to attend the discussion on the proposed Conference of the Central Authorities of the Eastern Countries.

At the Committee's invitation, a representative of the Nansen International Office for Refugees attended the discussion on the situation of Russian women in the East.

In reply to the request of the Salvation Army to be represented on the Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People, the Commission expressed the opinion that it would be most desirable for the Salvation Army to be represented on the Traffic in Women and Children Committee at its forthcoming session. An invitation was issued for a representative to be present during the discussion of the questions of the rehabilitation of prostitutes and women of Russian origin in the Far East. Lieut.-Commissioner Agnes POVLSEN, representing the Salvation Army, attended the Committee.

The Rev. Father ROBERT, Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, was also present, at the Committee's invitation, during the discussion of the situation of women of Russian origin in the East.

In response to the Committee's invitation, the International Bureau for the Unification of Penal Law was represented at the discussion on the suppression of the activities of *souteneurs* by Professor SASSERATH and Judge M. CALOYANNI, and the International Criminal Police Commission by M. F. LOUWAGE.

Adoption of the Agenda.

The agenda submitted by the Agenda Sub-Committee (document C.T.F.E.660) was approved.

Representation of Canada.

The Committee associated itself with the decision taken by the Child Welfare Committee on this matter.

Report by the Secretary.

The progress report was read by the Secretary, who gave additional information bringing the report up to date, and made certain comments.

Since the Committee's last session, the following States have become parties to the under-mentioned Conventions :

1921 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children.

Afghanistan, Colombia, Irish Free State.

1923 International Convention for the Suppression of the Circulation of and Traffic in Obscene Publications.

Colombia, Cuba.

1933 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age.

Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Chile, Iran, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland.

This Convention came into force on August 24th, 1934, in accordance with its Article 8, which stipulates that the Convention shall come into force sixty days after the Secretary-General of the League of Nations has received two ratifications or accessions.

The discussion of those items in the progress report which are specially mentioned on the agenda was deferred until they came up in due course during the work of the Committee.

Enquiry into Methods of Rehabilitation.

The discussions which have taken place in recent years on the abolition of the system of licensed houses and of the regulation of prostitution have revealed, on almost every occasion, a desire to find out what could be done to assist the women who would be turned out of the houses to regain their self-respect ; and further to consider what measures could be taken to prevent women and girls from falling into a life of prostitution.

At the 1934 session, when a series of resolutions concerning the abolition of systems of regulation was accepted, emphasis was laid on the importance of making a study of rehabilitation measures, so that countries which are considering the possibility of abolition might be assisted in their preparations for action, and that in abolitionist countries measures for rehabilitating girls and women who were leading a life of prostitution might be co-ordinated.

The Traffic in Women and Children Committee accordingly decided that an enquiry should be made into measures for the rehabilitation of prostitutes and the prevention of prostitution in relation to the traffic in women and children. Mr. S. Cohen, Assessor representing the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls, Women, and Children, was appointed Rapporteur.

The Council had confirmed the decision of the Agenda Sub-Committee as to the terms of the enquiry, and expressed the view that Governments might be approached by the Secretary-General with a request to supply all the necessary information.

The subject was a very wide one, and it was therefore ultimately decided to limit it in scope and to restrict the enquiry to a number of selected voluntary organisations and individuals.

A questionnaire was prepared, aiming at obtaining information which, so far as is known, has never before been examined thoroughly on an international basis, as to the social services which are available and the methods adopted in the different countries for the purpose of rehabilitating women and girls who have taken to, or are in danger of taking to, a life of prostitution.

It was also sought to learn from countries where prostitution was regulated, and where there were licensed or tolerated houses, what measures (if any) they took to discourage women and girls from taking to or continuing in such a life.

It was further hoped to obtain information as to any special measures which had been taken to help women and girls who were giving up prostitution after living in licensed or tolerated houses.

The Committee was particularly anxious to ascertain whether there were arrangements for the free treatment of venereal disease and for the better provision of treatment and accommodation for mental defectives.

It was hoped, too, to get some knowledge of how organisations kept themselves abreast of modern knowledge and methods, and whether they kept records which might be of value for comparative study.

The answers were not in all cases as complete as was hoped, and some of them unfortunately arrived too late to be utilised for the report this year, as, for instance, the reply from Belgium, which could not be included in the report but, as it contained a criticism of the subject-matter of the questionnaire, was communicated to the Committee. The Rapporteur, in consultation with the Secretariat, decided that further and fuller information would be required before a final report could be prepared, and resolved that a preliminary report should be presented to this session of the Committee with a request for leave to continue the study.

The preliminary report was composed of four chapters :

I. An Historical Survey of the Treatment of the Question since the Formation of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee ;

II. A Survey of the General Trend of Opinion and the Divergencies of Opinion contained in the Answers of the Organisations ;

III. A Summary of the Replies received, by Countries. This chapter gives information as to existing organisations ready to give social service, and describes the methods used ;

IV. Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Study.

The replies received dealt, in most cases, with the questionnaire from the point of view of both adult women and minors.

Whilst dealing fairly adequately with minors, they did not give a great deal of information with regard to adult women. The preliminary report observed in this connection : " It is here that the most serious difficulties are met with and, comparatively speaking, the strongest disinclination on both sides is encountered — both on the part of the voluntary organisation and of the prostitute."

The Rapporteur was of opinion that the inadequacy of the replies on this aspect of the whole question showed the necessity of continuing the study. He indicated, *inter alia*, the following points which resulted from the enquiry.

An analysis of the replies received showed that certain countries might be taken as typical of a certain group of countries, or of a certain type of work carried out in the majority of countries, but there were other countries from which no information at all was available.

Whilst information from some countries could be considered satisfactory, the practice in other countries was only superficially outlined by some indications in a general report of an international organisation.

From Asia, for instance, no information had been received, except from certain provinces in India. Information regarding North America came only in respect of the United States of America and, except for Uruguay and the Argentine, no information had come from any of the South-American States. It was therefore suggested that, for the purpose of arriving

at conclusions and recommendations, the enquiry should be extended to other questions which were not dealt with or were insufficiently treated in the preliminary report. The Committee was asked to decide whether it wished the preventive side to be fully included in the final report, and came to the conclusion that this question must be postponed for the present.

In the Rapporteur's opinion, the question of rehabilitation would have to be combined with other social services, and the question of State assistance would need to be considered in this connection. Fuller information was required as to the possibilities of training and the subsequent employment of ex-prostitutes, " after-care " work, etc. The possibility of co-ordinating efforts in the different countries and of standardising methods would have to be considered. The problem of the mental defective and the venereally diseased woman and girl required fuller study.

As a result of the discussion, the Committee came to the conclusion that the further study should be a limited one, and should deal more especially with the adult woman. There is, however, among prostitutes, a group requiring particular attention — namely, those who are of minor age but are above the age-limit for the juvenile court. In some countries, there are minors who have been allowed to register as prostitutes, though not allowed to become inmates of licensed houses.

The Committee felt that it was impossible to continue at present the study of the wider aspects of preventive work, but that the Secretariat should be at liberty to supplement the information contained in the preliminary report by applying to some other voluntary organisations, particularly in those countries from which no information had so far been obtained.

The Committee was of opinion that a useful line of enquiry would be to obtain information regarding the social services which were used in connection with the treatment of venereal disease.

It was also felt that efforts towards rehabilitation would meet with greater success if the antecedents of the women concerned were investigated.

It is particularly hoped that the Governments concerned will take advantage of the means at their disposal to answer the questions formulated on these points.

Taking up the suggestions made in Chapter IV of the preliminary report and arising during the discussion of the question, the Committee has drawn up a new questionnaire.

As the Council had already authorised the Secretary-General last year to approach Governments, it was decided to send Parts I and II of the questionnaire, which deal with the rehabilitation of the adult prostitute, to all Governments Members and non-members of the League of Nations, and also to the assessors represented on the Committee, and Part III, which is a limited study of the antecedents of prostitutes in the different countries, only to the Governments represented on the Committee and to the assessors.

It is hoped that the Government replies will be received by November 1st, 1935, in order to give ample time for a complete study of the material received, so that a satisfactory report can be prepared for the Committee's next session.

Suppression of the Activities of " Souteneurs ".

At its last session, the Assembly noted with satisfaction that the Traffic in Women and Children Committee had decided in 1934 to continue its consideration of this question. The Committee, at its present session, accordingly resumed work on the preparation of an international convention for the suppression of the activities of *souteneurs*.

In 1931, the Committee prepared a preliminary draft, which was submitted by the Council to the Governments for observations. This consultation showed that a large number of Governments were, in principle, in favour of the preparation of an international convention providing penalties for *souteneurs* (document C.T.F.E.566). The numerous observations received by the Secretariat were referred by the Committee to a Legal Sub-Committee, which, on the basis of those observations, made fresh proposals (documents C.T.F.E.584 and 590).

Last year, the Committee, in accordance with a general recommendation by the fourteenth Assembly, decided that its study of the problem of the *souteneur* should be continued in collaboration with the International Bureau for the Unification of Penal Law. The Bureau, at its session in Paris at the beginning of 1935, drew up a draft Convention, consisting of five articles, designed to suppress the exploitation of the prostitution of others (document C.T.F.E.645). The Committee thanked the Bureau for its valuable assistance.

The Secretariat collected in a single document for the present session of the Committee the texts proposed by the members of the Legal Sub-Committee and by the International Bureau for the Unification of Penal Law, and added draft final clauses for a proposed convention (document C.T.F.E.657).

The Committee held a general exchange of views on the various proposals submitted to it. It considers that it would be premature at the present time to submit to the Council a fresh draft convention on the subject, as it thinks that the various questions still require exhaustive study, for which it has had no time at the present session. For this purpose it has appointed a Sub-Committee composed of the following delegates :

M. Bourgois (France),
M. Maus (Belgium),
M. Martinez-Amador (Spain),
Mme. Woytowicz-Grabinska (Poland),
Count Ugo Conti Sinibaldi (Italy),
Professor Pella (Roumania).

This Sub-Committee will be assisted by experts of the International Bureau for the Unification of Penal Law, the International Criminal Police Commission, and the Social Questions Section and Legal Section of the Secretariat.

The United Kingdom delegate pointed out that Article 1 of the draft Convention before the Committee would, as explained by the authors, apply to persons who aid, assist, or encourage prostitution in licensed houses, and that consequently it could not be accepted without reservation by those countries which still maintained the system of licensed houses. Further, the draft Convention was incomplete because it did not include a number of other provisions which the experience of abolitionist countries had shown to be necessary for the suppression of commercialised vice. For these reasons, it was, in his opinion, a waste of time for the Committee to proceed at the present time with further consideration of the draft Convention. This view was supported by several other members.

The United Kingdom delegate expressed doubt whether any effective solution of the problem could be reached until further progress had been made towards the abolition of licensed houses ; but he suggested that the Committee might request the Secretariat to prepare for the next session a statement from the information in its possession showing the measures taken in representative countries, both regulationist and abolitionist, to deal with commercialised vice, in order that the Committee might consider whether any useful measure of agreement could be reached.

Certain delegates, on the other hand, felt that the Committee was in a position to take a decision on the question at the present session. They observed that, in their view, the proposed text would be satisfactory to the abolitionist Governments, because it made every form of exploitation of another's prostitution a punishable offence. A few members of the Committee expressed the opinion that the text proposed by the International Bureau for the Unification of Penal Law could be accepted.

The exchange of views which has taken place has been recorded in the Minutes and will serve as a guide to the Sub-Committee for its future work. The Sub-Committee is asked to make, with the help of the Secretariat, a legislative study of the question and to prepare a preliminary draft convention, which will be submitted to the members and assessors of the Committee, if possible, three months before the next session.

Proposed Conference of the Central Authorities of the Eastern Countries.

The Commission of Enquiry into Traffic in Women and Children in the East mentioned, among other steps which should be taken, the exchange of information by the central authorities throughout the East. The question was discussed by the Advisory Commission in 1933 and 1934 and led to further discussion by the Traffic in Women and Children Committee at its fourteenth session, in 1935, M. Bourgois, delegate of France, being appointed Rapporteur.

The Assembly had stated, in the course of the 1934 session, that, in its opinion, the report of the Commission of Enquiry should be considered at a conference of the authorities responsible in Eastern countries for the measures taken to prevent traffic in women and children, and the Committee was informed that a circular letter had accordingly been sent to the Governments interested (Afghanistan, United Kingdom, China France, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Siam and United States of America), and that seven countries had so far sent in replies. The answers from the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United States of America, were favourable, the United Kingdom, *inter alia*, stating that the Governments of Hong-Kong and the Straits Settlements "would be prepared to appoint representatives ". France and Portugal both agreed, under certain conditions, to the holding of the Conference.

During the discussion, the representative of the Chinese Government informed the Committee that his Government was prepared to take part in the proposed conference. The representative of Japan, who was present in an advisory capacity, made a statement which implied the possibility of the Japanese Government's being in favour of the conference.

Of the twelve Governments applied to, therefore, half have replied in the affirmative, and one Government has made a statement which affords a hope of ultimate agreement.

Negative answers have been received from Iraq, who declared herself unable to take part in the conference, and from India, who informed the Secretariat that, " as the main interests of the conference will be the international traffic, and as this traffic does not concern India, the Government of India feels that no advantage is to be gained by India being represented ".

During the deliberations, however, the Indian delegate stated that she would place before her Government the favourable statement made by China, the attitude taken up by Japan, and the full discussion, with the conclusions arrived at, by the Committee, in order that

the Government of India might appreciate the position in the light of these subsequent developments.

The replies before the Committee contained two further suggestions : the United Kingdom Government stated that " the Government of the Straits Settlements . . . sees serious objections, from a local point of view, to the suggestion that the conference should be held in Singapore at the same time as the meeting of the Advisory Council of the Eastern Bureau of the Health Organisation ".

The answer of the Netherlands Government suggested that the work of the conference would be facilitated if, as far as possible, an agenda could be established.

There was further a suggestion with regard to the date of the conference, the date originally proposed (beginning of 1936) being considered too early to allow of thorough preparation and sufficient preliminary correspondence with the Governments concerned.

As to the place where the conference should be held, Hong-Kong was suggested instead of Singapore, but was rejected on the Committee's being informed that the same local objection applied to both places. It was also suggested that some town in the Netherlands Indies might be appropriate, but it was generally felt that it should be left to the Secretary-General to discuss the meeting-place of the conference with the Governments concerned.

The same procedure should apply to the question of the composition of the conference, it being suggested that the Secretary-General might find out whether the Governments felt that the conference should be composed solely of their official representatives, whether other delegates should also be invited, and whether delegates from voluntary or other organisations should be appointed by the Governments.

The Committee also expressed the wish that the Director of the Social Questions Section of the League of Nations should represent the Secretariat at this conference.

A further proposal was put forward that, in view of the long time which has elapsed since the submission of the Commission of Enquiry's report and the danger of the conference's being still further delayed, the Committee should appoint a liaison agent to establish co-operation between the League of Nations and the central authorities of the Far Eastern countries.

It was unanimously agreed that the conference should be held as soon as it could be properly arranged, the autumn or the winter of 1936 seeming to be the earliest date possible in the circumstances.

Since, however, a further postponement of the date seems unlikely on the supposition of further favourable answers' being shortly received, it was felt that the immediate appointment of a liaison officer was not necessary. For the time being, therefore, no decision was taken on this point. The Committee also felt that the question might be better discussed at the conference itself, it being left to the countries concerned to decide whether such an appointment was desirable.

As to the question of the agenda of the conference, the Committee agreed with the Netherlands Government that an agenda should be established beforehand, in order to enable each Government concerned to prepare for the conference. The Secretariat was therefore requested to study all the suggestions so far made with regard to the agenda of the conference, and to submit proposals to the next session of the Advisory Commission.

The Traffic in Women and Children Committee finally agreed to the following resolution :

" 1. The Assembly having, at its fifteenth session, expressed the opinion that the report of the Commission of Enquiry into Traffic in Women and Children in the East should be considered at a conference of the authorities who are responsible in Eastern countries for the measures taken to prevent traffic in women, with a view to securing closer co-operation and greater exchange of information between them :

" The Traffic in Women and Children Committee has heard with much satisfaction that Governments of countries in the East have expressed their willingness to co-operate in the holding of such a conference under the auspices of the League of Nations.

" 2. The Committee expresses the hope that, if possible, the conference shall take place next year, after careful preparation in consultation with the Governments concerned ; it suggests that the autumn or winter of next year might be the most convenient time.

" 3. The Committee requests the Council to authorise the Secretary-General to make all the necessary arrangements in consultation with the Governments concerned, especially with regard to the choice of a convenient place of meeting, the manner in which the conference should be constituted, and the subjects to be discussed. The Committee hopes that the Director of the Social Questions Section will attend the conference in view of his experience of the East and his special knowledge of the question to be discussed.

" 4. The Traffic in Women and Children Committee expressed the desire to have an opportunity of considering the agenda of the conference at its next session, in April 1936, when a joint session of the Child Welfare Committee and the Traffic in Women and Children Committee could be arranged."

Position of Women of Russian Origin in the Far East.

The question of the plight of women refugees of Russian origin in the Far East, to which prominence is given in the report of the Commission of Enquiry into Traffic in Women and Children in the East, was discussed by the Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People in 1933 and 1934. In bringing the matter before the Council, in May 1934, the Commission requested the Council to draw the attention of the Assembly to this question, in the hope that some solution could be found.

The problem was discussed by the Fifth and Sixth Committees of the 1934 Assembly, which decided that further enquiries should be made on the spot, and the Secretariat was asked to collect further information from official and unofficial sources.

In accordance with these instructions, a number of Governments and authorities, as well as organisations and individuals, likely to be interested, were approached by the Secretariat, and a document (C.T.F.E.656 and addendum) was submitted to the Committee, containing a summary of the information received up to the time of its meeting. In this study, the Secretariat gave indications that the situation had become still more serious since the visit of the Commission of Enquiry to the Far East. It enumerated the special difficulties concerning the question, due to the fact that the victims were widely dispersed in the big towns, and also to the diversity of character of the present voluntary organisations and their lack of co-operation.

In opening the discussion on this point, the Rapporteur, Dr. Estrid Hein, delegate of Denmark, reminded the Committee that, as stated in the document prepared by the Secretariat and referred to above, " it would appear from the reports received that, while the situation of the individual women of Russian origin may be equally bad in other big towns, it is only in Shanghai that the question has assumed the dimensions of a mass social problem, and that here it is fast outgrowing the scope of private and semi-private charity, and calls for a collective effort ". The delegate of France submitted to the Committee additional information, especially with regard to Shanghai.

The chief gap in the information received by the Secretariat was in regard to the evolution of the situation in Manchuria since the Commission's visit. This was to a great extent bridged over by a report submitted orally by the assessor representing the International Federation of the " Amies de la Jeune Fille ", who gave a very full account of the situation in Harbin and the possibility of extending considerable assistance to stranded women in Manchuria at the cost of comparatively modest efforts.

Additional information was given by the representative of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, who had had great personal experience of that part of the world.

It is stated that only 5 % of the prostitutes of Russian origin had adopted that mode of life before their arrival in the Far East. If this is so, it would appear that it was the special circumstances in which the women found themselves that led so many of them to take to a life of prostitution. The Committee took note with interest of the fact, mentioned by various speakers, that much of the danger of these women's falling into prostitution would be eliminated if they could be taught languages and trained for some profession.

After a long discussion on this question, the following resolution was unanimously adopted :

" 1. The Traffic in Women and Children Committee has examined the information which the Secretary-General has collected, in accordance with the decision of the 1934 Assembly, in regard to women of Russian origin in the Far East who have fallen into prostitution, and recommends that this information should be printed and placed at the disposal of the Assembly.

" 2. The information which has reached the League of Nations from various sources, both official and non-official, shows that the question is still serious, especially at Harbin, Mukden, Shanghai, and Tientsin. Much is being done by voluntary effort to alleviate the situation, but it appears to the Committee that these efforts need to be guided and co-ordinated by the municipalities in consultation with one another.

" 3. The Committee thinks that the most hopeful way of attacking the problem will be, in particular, to increase considerably the social measures available for women of Russian origin in Harbin and other places in Manchuria, so as to prevent their drifting into prostitution in these areas or seeking the same mode of life elsewhere. The Committee has reason to believe that some of the important international societies which carry on work among women might be willing, if invited, to strengthen and co-ordinate their activities in the area mentioned.

" 4. On the other hand, the Committee feels serious apprehension as to the extent to which many of these women of Russian origin are falling into the hands of traffickers. It strongly recommends that the attention of all authorities of the countries concerned should be drawn to this state of affairs, and that they should be urged to take all possible steps to frustrate the activities of these traffickers.

" 5. It is apparent that financial help will be needed to enable the necessary social measures to be taken in different centres.

" The Committee feels confident that, when this need is realised, an appeal will meet with a generous response, not only from the general public, but from the municipalities."

Mlle. Lavielle thought that an appeal should be made to Governments to issue an official stamp to be sold in aid of the Harbin victims.

Summary of Annual Reports.

The Secretary, in his progress report, had drawn the attention of the Committee to the fact that, for many years, only a few more than half the Members of the League had sent in reports. It was evident that the abstention of so many countries decreased the value of the information, the chief importance of this type of information being found in its universality ; thus, a country which did not report, not only deprived the Committee of the information relating to itself, but reduced the comparative value of the whole body of information.

There was also the great diversity of information sent in by the different Governments, which led one of them to state in its annual report, in support of a special line taken by it, that the reports from various Governments differed so widely as regarded the scope of the cases to be reported, and the number of cases reported depended so much on the activity of the various police forces, that the conclusions reached were of necessity only approximate.

The Committee endorsed the Secretary's observations regarding the annual reports and was of opinion that better results as to the number of replies received from Governments might be obtained if the Secretariat were to send out reminders. It authorised the Secretariat to take the necessary steps in this connection.

It was agreed that the questionnaires on traffic in women and children and on obscene publications would have to be reviewed in 1936 with a view to meeting the views expressed by the Committee in previous years that repetition and monotony in the reports should be avoided as far as possible, and that the summary should contain, on a uniform basis, as much information concerning the traffic and obscene publications as could be obtained from Governments.

Examination of the Reports of the Voluntary Organisations.

The reports submitted to the Committee by the assessors representing the international organisations proved that these organisations had continued their valuable work throughout the past year ; the reports show, however, that their financial difficulties have increased still further since 1934, when the situation was already reported to be very serious. The assessors substantiated and commented on their reports.

The Committee considered that the authorities of all countries should help the benevolent societies in their fight against the traffic by reserving, free of charge, appropriate places for their notices informing women and children where they may find help and shelter, especially when making contracts with regard to posters in railway stations.

It was pointed out by various speakers, and endorsed unanimously by the Committee, that great value was attached to the services performed by the voluntary organisations in the field of work connected directly and indirectly with the problem of the traffic.

Budget.

The draft budget for 1936 submitted by the Secretariat was unanimously adopted.

Date of the Next Session.

It was decided that the fifteenth session of the Traffic in Women and Children Committee should open on Monday, April 20th, 1936.

(Signed) Enrique J. GAJARDO V.,
Chairman.

(Signed) Dr. Estrid HEIN,
Vice-Chairman.

(Signed) Eric Einar EKSTRAND,
Secretary, Director of the Opium Traffic and Social Questions Sections.